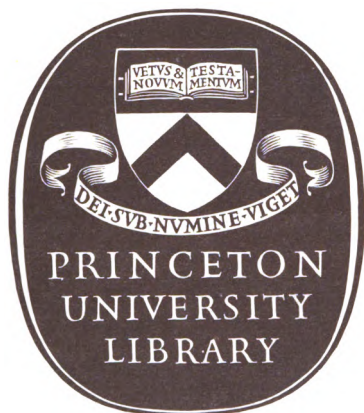


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This work has met with a rapid sale, and is spoken of in the most flattering terms by eminent clergymen, and the English Press, as may be gathered from the following brief extracts from letters and notices.

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ALBERT OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE, *History of the
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

Two objects are aimed at in the following pages—the first, to interest the reader in the narrative of events disclosed, and in the portrayal of the characters introduced—the second, to give substantial and accurate information regarding times which are imperfectly known, or which have been wilfully misrepresented. If both objects are attained, those who have read *Florine* will have acquired a knowledge of circumstances hitherto slurred over by most historians, and their minds will be impressed with a deep reverence for the memory of those Christian heroes and heroines, who took part in the first Crusade.

It does not become an author to anticipate in what manner his work may be received by the public; but in addressing for the first time a new class of readers—the Catholics of the United States, he may be permitted to state that for one portion of this work—all that bears upon history, and the historical personages introduced into it, many years constant reading of the monastic writers have prepared him. Out of the abundant materials collected from such sources the present work has been composed. Surrounded by those authorities, the author has revived the times when the Church was omnipotent, when all Europe moved at the bidding of a Pontiff, and faith made men heroes and women willing martyrs. He portrays in the siege and capture of

Antioch, one episode in the struggle of the Cross against the Crescent—of the disciples of Christ against the followers of Mahomet; and still adhering to history, he shows by their virtues and their vices, on which side were valour and purity, and on which vice and the despairing energies of Satan.

Strengthened by the approbation of Catholic clergymen who have read these pages, the author ventures to add one remark, namely, that striving to make this a work, alike instructive and edifying, he has further endeavoured to show that a book inspiring no thoughts but what are good, can at the same time be so constructed as to fix the attention and excite the curiosity of the reader, as if it were intended to be nothing more than a merely amusing tale.

To the American publishers of *Florine*—the author feels bound to express his thanks. They have generously offered to compensate him for his literary labour, regardless of the right accorded by the existing law, to publish without assigning any such compensation.

The example thus given, the author wishes to see imitated, not merely in the United States, but in the British dominions. To those who have thus voluntarily acted will the praise of an honest and honourable action be due of him, who receives the advantage of such conduct, the fitting task is publicly to express his gratitude.

VERNON AVENUE CLONTARF,

Dublin, 20th January, 1855.

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FLORINE:

A Tale of the First Crusaders.

CHAPTER I.

THE CRUSADERS' OUTPOST.

CONSTERNATION and grief pervaded the ranks of the Crusaders as they stood in battle array before the city of Antioch, and looked with longing, but still despairing eyes, upon its high walls and hundreds of square-built towers. Hitherto they had readily faced peril, encountered difficulties, and exposed themselves to danger. Confident in the faith that animated them, they had marched onward to the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of infidels. Nicæa had been captured by them, and their dauntless bravery in the Gorgonian valley of Bithynia had won for them a passage into Syria; but now, winter had come upon them in presence of the apparently impregnable Antioch. They saw that city, in which the followers of Our Lord had first assumed the glorious name of Christians, held by a valiant and numerous army of infidels, and when they elevated their eyes to the high hill which rises in the centre of the city, and on which then stood, in all its pristine beauty, the magnificent temple erected by Constantine in honour of the Prince of the Apostles, they perceived

that upon its topmost pinnacles were placed the decapitated heads of some of their own companions in arms. They gazed, and shuddered as they gazed, on the barbarous trophies of the cruelty of the foe towards such Crusaders as had unhappily been made captives in war.

It was not, however, the cruelty of the enemy to their brother soldiers, it was not the high walls, nor the flanking River Orontes, nor the number of their opponents, nor the manifold dangers of besieging a place so strongly fortified, that shook the nerve or abated the courage of the Crusaders. The enemy that they feared was not *before*, but in *the midst* of them—it was famine—famine in its most frightful form. When the Turks, for the purpose of terrifying them, had decapitated the Christian prisoners, and exposed their remains upon the temple of Antioch, the Crusaders, to manifest their contempt for the infidels, had cut off the heads of their own prisoners, and charging their balistas with them, had sent them flying, as if they were offensive weapons, into the faces of the defenders of the town. They sought to provoke the Turks to an attack. They longed for battle, in order that, if they were to die, they might fall with swords in their hands, and not perish as they then were, slowly and miserably, from the want of food.

Day after day strong parties were dispatched from the Christian camp to scour the country around in search of food: but such attempts had been anticipated by the Turks, who had provisions either conveyed into Antioch, or so concealed in the earth, that it was impossible to discover where they had

been hidden. Despair and consternation were, therefore, amongst the Christians; for, as it is said by an ancient chronicler, who was at the time in the camp before Antioch, "so high was the price of food that an ass-load of corn cost seven pounds in gold, and the price of a dozen of eggs was twelve pence!"

It was the winter season, and as all chances of a speedy encounter with the infidels had vanished, despair descended into the very midst of the Christian encampment. It was at this period of time that there might be seen collected on the banks of the Orontes a group of soldiers, who had been posted in that position for the purpose of giving the earliest information to their commanders of any hostile movement being attempted on the part of the besieged. The commander over this body of men was a Burgundian, named Guy of Mascon—a man whose snow white hair and shaggy white eyebrows, and thin visage, all corrugated with wrinkles, gave him the appearance of having reached his seventieth year, but in whose large brilliant dark eyes and active movements there was discernible all the fire of youth combined with all the muscular power of middle age. Nature seemed to have fitted Guy of Mascon for the position which he at that moment occupied, for his dazzling eye seemed never to tire in examining every nook and corner of the landscape through which he passed, and the ceaseless movement of his head and body appeared to render it impossible that even a bird could fly through the air, or a wild animal speed across the plain, unmarked by him. At such a moment his skeleton-like figure, encased in tight-fitting scale armour, was a personification of

the famine that pervaded the camp ; and as he stood upon the fallen trunk of a tree, peering over his fellows, and scrutinizing the very chinks in the walls before him, he looked the image of hunger, seeking in vain for food to satisfy its cravings.

From the walls, Guy of Mascon turned his eyes to the land around, and seemed to run it over with the same speed that a massive cloud casts its shade upon a sunshiny and windy day over each portion of a wide-spread field. There was nought to arrest his gaze but the prostrate figure of a poor pilgrim, who lay, with his face to the earth, and his arms outstretched, as if in fervent prayer. From the land he next looked upon the river, and as his glance dwelt upon its rippling waters, there was nothing to indicate to his companions that he had seen aught to attract his especial notice, except that on his thin lips there fluttered for an instant a death-like smile, and that then he turned around, so as that his back should appear to be directly opposite to the city, whilst the downward course of the river lay at his left hand. If any purpose lay concealed in this movement, it was that those who watched from the ramparts the Christian camp, might be led to suppose that they, on the outermost post, were unconscious of there being any necessity for keeping a strict watch ; and, as if to impress his own followers with the same idea, Guy addressed them by saying, "Soldiers, you may, like myself, sit down and rest yourselves. I see nought in Antioch, or on the land beneath it, that requires particular watchfulness on our part. Sit down—sit down. Not *there*, however, young Philip of Brefney, I do not wish thee to sit

between me and the river. I like to keep my eye fixed upon the stream; at this moment it interests me much. I see, Philip, thou hast, I suppose in the hope of meeting with a wild bird or beast, brought shooting gear with thee. Lend me, Philip, thy bow, and the best, thinnest, and surest of thy arrows; I have heard the Irish arrows much lauded, and, perhaps, may try, before we are relieved, if they equal those for making which our native town is famed. Ah! here is an arrow, such as I wished for—thin enough to shoot a sparrow, and not mangle it. Right, right, the point is as sharp as a bodkin. Let us talk, my men. Talk, I say—I wish you to amuse yourselves.”

“*Amuse* ourselves, forsooth!” replied a soldier, how can starving men find pleasure in anything but food? Look back upon the camp, good Guy, and see of what it is composed. Of poor wretches who are wasted with want—of the despairing, of the dying, and of the dead. Anarchy and confusion pervade our ranks. Hundreds of the common soldiers have died of starvation—and, more deplorable still—for they are recreants who have done so—hundreds have fled as deserters from the camp.”

“What sayest thou, Hubert of York?” exclaimed Guy of Mascon, who showed, by his question, a manifest desire to engage his soldiers in some topic, so that they should not only appear to others, but be, in fact, interested, and, if possible, altogether absorbed in its discussion. “What sayest thou? That men, who have placed the cross, the emblem of their salvation, upon their breasts, should have fled from Antioch—should have become runaways—in the pre-

sence of that holy church, in which, it is believed, still lies concealed the lance that pierced our Saviour's side—should have feared death, when they saw before them the church sanctified with the relics of St. Ignatius the Martyr. What! have cross-marked Christians fled from the fight when the prize was to win that church in which St. Peter first placed his chair, and was the first Apostle, and in which so many Councils of our Holy Church have been held, and in which pious prelates have gathered together whenever a new patriarch was to be elected? Oh! it is impossible; it may not—it cannot be.”

“Alack! say not that it is impossible,” rejoined Hubert of York, “for it is but too true, that hundreds of the multitude of fighting men who gathered beneath the standard of the cross, have fled, not from it, but from hunger; yea, and the same baseness, and the same cowardice have been audaciously exhibited even by those who by rank and position were bound to give shining examples of courage and virtue to their inferiors.”

“Take care—take care, honest Hubert, that thy zeal doth not induce thee unwittingly to bear false witness against thy neighbor,” remarked Guy. “Canst mention any one of the leaders in the camp who have so misconducted themselves? As a general charge against our chiefs, thy accusation, I must frankly say, is incredible.”

“I can name not merely one, but two—aye, three”—answered Hugh, excited by the observations of Guy. “I say that amongst these runaways from Antioch, are Peter the Hermit himself, William Car-

penter, the Viscount of Melun, and Tengus the Rich, of Romania."

A shout of execration burst from the soldiers, when Peter the Hermit was so irreverently spoken of by Hugh, and it was with difficulty that the names of the others were heard to be pronounced by him. In the midst of this momentary clamor, Philip of Brefney started to his feet, and grasping a firm hold of the heavy battle-axe that lay by his side, he said, whilst his fair face and delicate cheeks became suffused with blood for an instant, and then the scarlet tinge with which they seemed to burn was followed by the pallor and the icy chill of death.

"Hugh of York, I defy thee to prove thy words. I say thy accusation against the venerable Peter is a monstrous, a rank, a wilful——; but no—no—thou bearest the cross. I knelt by thy side in Clermont, when the good Pope Urban bestowed upon the volunteers for the Holy Land, his benediction. I have since seen thee in the battle field; and when Robert, the son of King William, stood with the golden standard of Normandy in the midst of a hundred raging Saracens, and called upon the Christians to sustain him in the conflict, thou wast—for then, too, I was by thy side—amongst the first to follow his rallying cry, and to beat back the foe, and to change an almost certain defeat into a glorious victory. A brave man may be deceived, he may be induced to believe a calumny, but he never willingly will propagate one, much less deliberately invent a false accusation against another. Pardon me, Hubert, if I have said ought to offend thee; but repeat not, I

pray thee, ever again, what thou hast now so rashly spoken of Peter the Hermit."

"I repeat only what I am sure is true," bluntly answered Hugh, and not seeming to have heard either the half-uttered insult or the readily-spoken excuse of Philip.

"True! true!" cried Philip, again excited by sudden passion. "Dost mean to say that Peter the Hermit fled from the camp because he could not bear the pangs of hunger?"

"I mean that and nothing else," was the dogged response of Hugh.

"Oh! monstrous! monstrous calumny!" screamed Philip of Brefney, now maddened with rage. "Knowest thou not, Hugh, that what gathered together, on the march to Palestine, the immense masses of men under the guidance of Peter the Hermit, was not his exciting eloquence, but his great sanctity? that that sanctity was manifested in many ways, but in none more than in his almost miraculous abstinence? that unlike the majority of mankind, he was never known to taste of meat nor to eat bread, and that he only sustained life by a sip of wine or a scanty morsel of herbs? and yet now it is said of the very man who seemed to take a delight in the mortification of his appetite, that he has given a bad example to others, and from a dread of feeling the pangs of hunger, has abandoned those whom he had himself led into the dreadful position in which we now stand. Oh! it is a cruel and a monstrous calumny upon a most virtuous man."

"I am the ventilator of no calumnies. I am a Christian and a soldier, and I only repeat what I

am sure is the truth," was the determined response of Hugh.

"What!" cried Philip of Brefney, again seizing hold of his battle-axe, "wilt thou then repeat the accusation against the holy Peter the Hermit?"

"I will," said Hugh, grasping a heavy mace, on the end of which was slung, by an iron chain, a heavy iron ball covered with spikes; "I will maintain it, here or elsewhere, with open mouth and with clenched hand."

"Better prove it by a statement of solid facts, than maintain it with a dull, heavy-headed mace," coolly remarked Guy of Mascon, who up to this moment had kept the sidelong glance of his glittering eyes steadily fixed on the downward current of the Orontes, while his whole attention appeared to be given to the speakers, or to the trying the strength of the bow and the straightness of the arrow, which he dandled from hand to hand, as if they were playthings that he was fiddling with, and did not require for immediate use.

"Thy suggestion is in accordance with reason and justice," said Hugh. "I state, I say, what I know, when I affirm that Peter the Hermit, and William Carpenter, Viscount of Melun, both fled from the camp at the same time together, and during the night. I have not heard what reason or what excuse Peter the Hermit offered for acting in so unworthy a manner; but this I do know, that William Carpenter candidly declared, that though he feared no five foeman in the battle-field, he fled from the pangs of hunger. William Carpenter, you are, my comrades, all aware, is that champion so

wondrously strong, that no one man would venture to encounter him in single combat, for no hauberk, helmet or shield, has ever yet been made, that could withstand the single thrust of his gigantic spear; and yet he, even he, fled like a craven on the first assaults of hunger. The companion of his flight was Peter the Hermit; both were pursued by the dauntless hero, Tancred, and both were brought back as prisoners, and delivered up to the custody of Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum. I saw them myself in that discreditable position. As to William Carpenter, he would assuredly have been doomed to die an ignominious death, but that he has royal blood in his veins, is the relation of Hugh the Great of France, and also because he had, in every conflict with infidels hitherto, conducted himself with the bravery of a fearless soldier. For these reasons, it is notorious, his crime was pardoned, on condition of taking an oath that he would never again fly from the camp. He took the oath, and basely has he perjured himself, for sooner than endure hunger he has again fled from amongst us."

"But Peter the Hermit has remained," observed Philip.

"Aye, Peter the Hermit has remained," gruffly repeated Hugh.

"Then how knowest thou," asked Philip, "that he fled from the fear of hunger, since hundreds are daily perishing, and we have not, so severe is the loss occasioned by death, one thousand horses in the entire camp able to bear the weight of a man in armour?"

"I do but know what I say," answered Hugh, in

a subdued tone of voice. "I believe it is the will of God that we should be punished for our sins in many ways. He may have taken away our steeds in order to show that our confidence must not be placed in the bravery of our knights, but in His protection. He may have afflicted us with a plague of famine, as He has afflicted our enemies with a plague of many wars, in order that all may fear His vengeance. He may have visited us thus with scarcity, in order to humiliate us, and lest we should be puffed up with the pride of so many victories; and as to Peter the Hermit, perchance his flight from the camp may have been a punishment upon him for being vain of the renown he had won by his abstinence. But I have mentioned a third leading man who has fled from us, Tengus the Rich, of Romania."

"Oh! speak not of the vile wretch," said Philip. "Do not compare a craven Greek like him with Peter the Hermit. Tengus, it is notorious, obtained leave to quit us, upon the solemn promise that his sole object was to procure, in Romania, an abundant supply of food for his brother warriors. He left his tents and many articles of value here as a pledge of his return; but we now know he deliberately and perfidiously abandoned us, that having evaded by perjury, the perils of war, he has resolved never again to expose himself to them. Alas! alas! never was there a famine equal to that which now desolates the besieging army of the Christians before Antioch."

A murmuring sigh of assent was emitted from the pallid lips of the brave men who sat despondingly on the ground by the side of Philip of Brefney.

The sigh was followed by a silence of a few minutes, as if the soldiers were brooding over their misfortunes. This silence, it was feared by Guy of Mascon, would be broken by the men starting up and seeking to still their grief by appearing to discharge duties that were seemingly unnecessary, whereas his purpose was to retain those under his command in the same listless attitudes which they had for some time preserved. To attain this object, he therefore determined to become the chief spokesman of the party himself.

"Thou sayest, Philip," said Guy of Mascon, "that never was there a famine like to that which we now endure. In that thou errest. There was one far more dire, which occurred years before thou wast born, and which is engraven upon my memory with such terrible incidents, that all dangers to which I have since been exposed, appear undeserving of note. The story I have to tell thee is a long one—but whilst I tell it, stretch thyself down on the ground, and spread out thine arms and legs, so that none may see, but those who now sit around thee, thy friend Hugh divesting thee of thy heavy haubergeon and iron greaves, as before my story is concluded, I may require thee to hasten back, with all speed, to the valiant Godfrey of Bouillon. The Irish are light of heel and quick of hand, to announce a battle, or to win a victory. I compliment thy nation in fixing on thee, Philip of Brefney, to do my bidding on the present occasion.

"Now, soldiers, attend to me, and nought else; gaze not idly about you, whilst I tell to you my story respecting *a man-eater in Burgundy!*"

CHAPTER II.

THE MAN-EATER OF MASCON.

“Do not suppose”—said the veteran Guy of Mascon to the youthful soldiers who sat on the ground before him, and who watched with equal interest and respect every word spoken by him—“do not suppose that in inviting you to listen to the narration of some incidents in my early life I have any intention, when addressing myself to the ears of hungry men, to descant upon the horrors of a famine, to dwell upon its awful details, or to expatiate upon the pangs and the miseries of its victims. Suffice it to say, that it is now somewhat more than sixty years since a great dearth fell upon the earth. For three successive seasons, there was an almost utter failure of every growing crop in France, in Greece, in Italy, in the East, and in England. The sun appeared to have withdrawn his vivifying heat from the earth. During the autumnal months, the sky was obscured by clouds, and rain poured down almost incessantly upon the ground; the seed rotted in the soil; the cattle perished in the morasses; and weeds covered the plashy fields; men lived on the worst garbage they could discover, and when every other species of food failed, it was notorious that some miserable wretches actually lived upon the bodies of the dead. Nay, it was rumored, and that rumor found belief, that persons travelling through the land had, during that awful time, been set upon by Burgundians, attacked, and

murdered, and their bodies devoured by those who had slain them. It was even positively affirmed that human flesh had been offered for sale in the common market-place of the town of Tournus—that it had been frequently bought there—but that on one occasion this vile cheat, so practised on the unsuspecting, had been discovered, and the seller of human bodies torn to pieces by the mob, and his remains burned.

“How great must have been the sufferings of the population at that period, when such stories became prevalent! It was in vain that pious priests sold all the gold and silver vessels in their churches; it was in vain that poor creatures sought to sustain life, as they did in some places, by mixing a whitish clay with their other food—hundreds and thousands perished—perished miserably.

“The famine at length ceased; the earth teemed with its former abundance; the golden corn again covered the land; the cattle again browsed in the plains; but still joy was not given back to the country, for the consequences—the awful consequences of the famine—lay like a curse upon every village, and carried desolation into every hamlet in the district of the Masconnois.

“There was fear in every homestead—dread in the breast of every father—the icy pangs of terror chilled the distracted heart of every mother; for it was known that there were dispersed amid the Masconnois some monsters in human form—horrible wretches—who, having saved themselves from death by eating the flesh of their fellow-creatures, had so relished that abominable food, that they now preferred it to all others; and that to obtain it, they murdered their

victims *now* to gratify their appetites, as they had *formerly* done to prolong their own existence. In the deserted portions of this district it was believed that the life of any animal was more secure from destruction than that of a weak man, or of an unprotected female; whilst even in the towns and the villages, it was said—and many circumstances occurred to confirm the report—that those man-eaters resorted to various devices to tempt children into their power, in order that they might slay them and eat them.

“Such was the condition of the Masconnois when I was, I suppose, about ten or twelve years of age. There was nothing so constantly dinned into my ears by my terror-stricken mother, as warnings, if I should ever be left alone, never to go near a stranger, be it man or woman, old or young, and above all things to run away from every one I did not know, if they tempted me to come near them, by offering to give me a nice fresh egg, or a rosy-cheeked apple; for if I did, I would most assuredly be killed, roasted, and eaten by those awful man-eaters.

“‘Never, Guy,’ said my father to me, one day that my mother was, for the thousandth time, giving me the same warning; ‘never run away from any one; but at the same time, never accept a present from a stranger, without the permission of thy parents. To run away is the act of a coward; to accept a gift from one, to whom thou hast rendered no service, is an act of meanness, and I would sooner see thee dead, than find thee grow up a coward, or slave-like, willing to place thyself under an obligation to a stranger. Here, Guy, are three things for thee,

which, if thou wilt learn to make use of, will be, in case of necessity, a better protection for thee than all the womanly warnings of thy mother. Here is a bow, and a sheaf of the best Mascon arrows; when thou canst shoot a sparrow at twenty yards' distance, every time thou aimest at him, then it is thy own fault if a man-eater ever take thee by surprise.'

"'That feat I can already perform, father,' I answered, somewhat proudly.

"'Good child!' said he, patting me on the head. 'Here, then, is the third gift for thee—it is a tiny dagger. Here, boy, fasten it within the folds of thy tunic. Let none ever see thee draw it. A weapon like this, once exposed, and known to be possessed by a child of thine age, is worse than a toy; for a stronger hand than thine may grasp it, and plunge it in thy heart. Observe, then, Guy, thou art never to show this to a playfellow—never let any one know thou hast it. The secret—mark! is one on which thine own life depends. And then, remember, thou art never to draw this dagger, unless thou see—unless thou art sure that thine own life is in danger—and if it be, if thou hast no other means of saving thyself, then draw it quickly, and thrust it with all thy might—observe—not into the face, but into the bowels of thy adversary.'

"'Alas!' sighed forth my mother, 'is it thus you teach our child already to become a slayer of his fellow-creatures?'

"'I teach him no such thing,' replied my father, 'I only teach him how, in case an attack be made upon his life, he may best protect himself. The boy is to be a soldier; he must, like myself, render mili-

tary service to his country and his sovereign, for the land which he will inherit from me. He must learn betimes never to fear, never to think of running away, never to risk the loss of his *feud* by cowardice in the presence of a foe. The boy, if he be not a hypocrite, already gives proof that he is of a fearless spirit. I show him how, if he be at all times watchful, he can guard his own life as well as if he were twenty years of age. If he be cautious and courageous he is safe. Let him feel this, know this, and I am not more secure from the man-eaters than Guy. And, wife,' whispered my father to my mother, 'I can tell you it is necessary the boy should go armed; our neighbor's son, Ralph, has been missed from his home since morning, search has been made for the boy everywhere, and no doubt can be entertained but that he has been trepanned by the cannibals and destroyed.'

"What! Ralph, the fair-haired, rosy-cheeked, ever-smiling, gentle Ralph, the play-fellow of Guy, the constant companion of my child, taken away, killed, and—oh! horrible! horrible!" So screamed my mother in agony, as she clutched me in her arms, and close hugging me to her fast-beating heart, looked around her in terror, as if she feared that those who seized on Ralph were abroad to tear her own and only child away with them.

"Be calm, be calm, wife,' said my father, 'or you may make our son as timid as yourself. Come hither, Guy; tell me, hast thou and Ralph been playing much together of late?'

"We have, father.'

"In any one place more than another?'

“ ‘Yes, father, in the forest of Chatenay, which you know reaches close to the town.’

“ ‘What! two boys of ten and twelve years of age playing alone in the forest of Chatenay, and at such a time as this, too! How comes this, wife? Is this thy anxious care for the safety of my child? Two children alone in the forest of Chatenay! Thank Heaven! woman, and not thine own maternal tenderness, that thou art not weeping now for the loss of Guy as well as of Ralph.’

“ ‘Husband! I vow to thee,’ replied my mother, ‘I never heard that Guy and Ralph went to the forest, except in company with all the boys educated at the monastery of St. Vincent—there are sixty of them at least—and these sixty boys, I was told, were always under the constant watchful care of two of the monks, and never were they conducted further into the forest than the ancient and solitary church of St. John, the recreation of the children being ever terminated by a prayer in that church.’

“ ‘And we never did go alone there but once, mother,’ I added. ‘It was yesterday, and we did so, because we were told there were some beautiful birds’ nests close to the cabin of Peter the woodman.’

“ ‘Who told thee of the birds’ nests?’ asked my father.

“ ‘The son of Peter, he goes to the monastery school.’

“ ‘What age is he?’

“ ‘About my own age, father.’

“ ‘Do not all the boys receive food from the monks each day at noon?’

“ ‘They do, father.’

“ ‘And the son of Peter with the rest?’

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘Hast ever noticed what sort of food he prefers?’

“ ‘I have, father, it is always bread and fruit. He says he does not like the meat set before him at the monastery. It is not, he says, as nice, as juicy, nor as tender, nor cooked in the same manner that he gets it from his father at home.’

“ ‘Indeed!’ ejaculated my father. He paused for a few minutes, and then our conversation was thus continued:—

“ ‘Is his father rich?’

“ ‘I should think not, father, for I went near to the cabin in which he lives yesterday, when I was with Ralph, and it seemed to me to be nothing better than a miserable hovel, not much larger nor cleaner than a pig sty. I did not, however, go up quite close to it, for whilst Ralph and I were searching under the bushes, we saw a man at some distance from us. I do not know who it was, father. It might have been Peter the woodman; but whoever he was, he was lurking behind the trees, and, as I thought, trying to get between us and the town; and seeing this I got afraid.’

“ ‘Afraid! for shame, Guy.’

“ ‘Yes, afraid, father, for I had not then what I have now—a bow, arrows, or a sharp-pointed dagger. I got afraid, I say, and I ran away, and Ralph after me, and he said he would go there and look for the birds’ nest himself this morning.’

“ ‘Then, Guy,’ observed my father, ‘thou and I shall also go to the same place, and see if there are

the birds' nests of which Peter, the woodman's son, told thee and thy playfellow.'

"'Oh! husband, husband,' exclaimed my mother, 'I perceive plainly what is passing in thy mind. Thou believest that Ralph has been slain by the woodman; thou art going in search of the body, perchance to discover the murderer, and in the attempt to capture him thou exposest thy own life, and with thine own life, the life of my child. Oh! husband, have pity on a mother's fears; permit Guy to remain with me, and take thou with thee twenty of thy bravest townsmen, and arrest at once Peter the woodman.'

"'Woman!' answered my father, angrily, 'for wife I scarce can call thee, thou speakest from the selfishness of thine own heart. I admit to thee that I have my suspicions of Peter the woodman; I own to thee I have my fears that the boy Ralph has been murdered, and I wish to know if there are any grounds for my suspicions and my fears: if both be justified, the punishment of the criminal is as certain as that the sun is now shining. But suppose my surmises to be without foundation, and I were to act on thy suggestion, I should first be guilty of the cruelty of adding to the grief of Ralph's parents, and I would next expose to calumny, to torture certainly, and perhaps to death, a poor, helpless, hard-working man, for such may be, in fact, the character of Peter the woodman. I will not act as thou wishest; I am an old and practised warrior, and if Peter the woodman be a murderer, he must be aided by the devil himself if he can do aught of mischief to me whilst I am investigating his premises. Our son Guy shall accom-

pany me in the expedition : it is to be his first essay as a soldier, and he will remember that upon his watchfulness and vigilance, his courage and his steadiness, may depend the safety of his life and my own. As to thee, wife, I forbid thee to speak to associate, friend or slave, of our departure from this house. Observe, wife,' added my father, as he thrust a long dagger into his belt, and removed from the hooks on which they hung his helmet, sword, and shield, 'observe, I command thee, on thy obedience, to attend to thy household duties until I return. Thy maid-slaves require the eye of a watchful mistress over them; the lazy wenches want the whip, for they are the worst spinners in all Mascon. Go, Guy, kiss thy mother, and then hurry after me.'

"In an agony of tearless terror my mother folded me in her arms, and impressing upon my lips a long, long kiss, she let me go, saying, 'Away, away, Guy, and God's blessing and mine go with thee. It is thy father's will, and we are bound to obey him, for he is the master of the household, and responsible to Heaven alone for the guidance and the safety of us all.'

"My father had not proceeded ten yards from the house when he was overtaken by me. He took me tenderly by the hand, and smiling upon me, asked, 'if I had yet learned to distinguish between the eggs of a *pigeon*, a *crow*, and a *hawk*.' Any one who had seen us thus sauntering hand in hand together out of the town, never could have supposed that instead of intending to recreate ourselves by a walk, the expedition my father had in his mind was one in which he was about to expose the life of each to imminent

danger, not improbably to the destruction of one or both.

“As we advanced towards the forest, and that the sight of all human habitations was lost to us, the smile which a casual passenger might have remarked upon the countenance of my father disappeared, his lips became compressed, a glowing fire seemed to shoot forth in lurid glances from beneath his close-knit brows, and suddenly letting go my hand, he said—‘Guy, for what purpose, thinkest thou, I am bringing thee to the forest? Is it merely to seek for birds’ nests?’

“‘No, father,’ I replied. ‘I believe you suspect Peter the woodman to be a boy-stealer and man-eater, and if you find him to be so, you wish to have my help in killing him.’

“‘*Thy help!* ho! ho! ho!’ said my father, laughing heartily. ‘Why hast thou not told me that it was only yesterday that thou wast afraid, that thou didst flee from the sight of a man?’

“‘I did, father, for then I had not the arms of a man wherewith to defend my life, but now I have them, and I have also *you* by my side, and with you I would not fear to stand in this open road, and calmly abide the lances and the horses of a troop of knights, though I saw them all charging down upon us two alone.’

“‘Thou speakest like a brave boy, Guy; but the spirit of a warrior, without the skill of a soldier, leads more frequently to the slaughter than the victory of the courageous. Take heed, take heed, Guy, that thou are not a boaster; thou hast told me of thy skill with a bow and arrow, come, let me see what thou

canst do. Suppose an enemy is approaching us by stealth, that he has hidden behind those brambles yonder, that thou hast discerned his eye upon thee, that thou hast no larger object to aim at than the small bird that now rests upon the extremity of that thin twig, that my life depends upon the quickness of glance and the steadiness of thy hand, and that as suddenly as I speak the word—*shoot!* thou must discharge thy weapon, let us see what thou canst do. Understandest thou now what I say to thee?"

"‘I do, father, perfectly.’"

"‘And thou seest the bird?"

"‘Yes.’"

"‘Then—*shoot!*'"

"As my father spoke these words, I quickly drew a Mascon shaft from my quiver, as speedily attached it to the bow as I do this Brefney arrow, and as instantaneously discharged it at the object I aimed at as I do this."

And as old Guy of Mascon uttered the word, the whizzing of an arrow was followed by a shriek of horror and of pain that arose out of the waters of the Orontes. His astonished hearers, who had never looked towards the river from the time he had commenced his narrative, now perceived that the arrow of Guy had been aimed at what appeared to be the hollow shell of a gourd that was floating down the current, and that such was the fearful force with which the weapon had been discharged, that it had split the gourd in pieces, and transpierced the cheeks of a youth whose head it had covered, and who now, confused by his own blood, and bewildered with pain, was struggling helplessly in the stream."

"Philip of Brefney," exclaimed Guy, in the same unmoved tone in which he had been telling his story, "dash into the stream and drag the body of that carrion hither."

This command was on the instant obeyed. Philip, who, by the previous direction of Guy, had been disencumbered of his heavy defensive armour, plunged at once into the water, and, catching the wounded youth by a leg, he pulled him out of the river, and along the ground, and flung him apparently lifeless before the fallen tree on which Guy still remained sitting.

Guy placed his hand on the jugular vein of the senseless captive's neck, and then, as if perfectly satisfied with the examination he had made, he looked in the youth's face, and perceiving how it had been transpierced by the arrow, which was still sticking in it, he chuckled with delight, and muttered to himself, "It was a good aim. I guaged the position of the head aright; for an old man like me, it was, I think, an excellent shot; but now to arouse the infidel to consciousness." As he spoke, he chopped off, with a single blow of his dagger, the feathered end of the arrow, and then seizing the minute sharp point, he pulled the thin stick of the arrow out of the cheeks, through which they had penetrated, and as he did so, a copious discharge of blood followed.

"That will do," said Guy, looking up at his fellow-soldiers, "the pain of his wound will soon bring the unbeliever to his senses. Meanwhile, I may tell you, my friends, that so closely have we invested Antioch, that there was no chance of the Turks receiving any communication from without the walls,

unless some one could be found to make his way in safety to them by the river ; hence have I kept my eyes constantly fixed on the Orontes. I had observed the gourd for a long time in the waters ; I perceived that it approached us more quickly than the downward current would naturally carry it ; I suspected that, by whomsoever it was worn, he must have had it pierced so as to enable him to see before him and around him, and therefore I desired to engage your attention in such a manner as that he, thinking he had not been noticed, might be tempted to approach us so near that his capture would be inevitable. Whatever information he was bearing to Antioch, it is of importance to our chiefs to know, and we shall know it, if the wretch loves life, or if he will not prefer the keeping of his secret to days of torture, every minute of which shall be worse than death. See, his limbs writhe with agony, his eyes open. Philip, cast water in his face, in order that we may lose the less time with the miscreant, and the speedier know whatever intelligence he can impart to us."

CHAPTER III.

THE WOUNDED PRISONER.

THE captive was not restored to consciousness as speedily as Guy of Mascon had desired. The rough remedy suggested to Philip, and so willingly employed by him, that of drenching with copious showers of water the face of the wounded man, appeared to have

a contrary effect to that which it was intended to produce ; for, after a few convulsive movements of the limbs, and the eyes glaring around with a ghastly stare for two or three moments, all motion and all sensation were at an end, and the body lay as if it were a rigid corpse, before the Crusaders.

“ I hope I have not killed him,” said Guy, in a tone of voice which plainly denoted rather grief for his own awkwardness than regret for the deed he had performed. “ I should be so sorry if the infidel died, and had buried with him in the grave the message of which he is the bearer. What weak animals these unbelievers are ! Here, now, is a fellow, not more, I am sure, than nineteen or twenty years of age, if so much, with wiry, small, but still muscular limbs, able, one would think, to endure much fatigue, and yet a little blow, such as a Christian soldier would not care for two minutes together, has stricken him dead, if he be dead, or has, at least, so stupefied him, that I might as well at once have despatched him with my sword. Ah ! those infidels are not men, but dogs—worse than dogs.” And as Guy of Mascon thus spoke, he spurned with his foot the senseless body from him, and then turning to the English soldier, added :—“ Hugh of York, hasten to the tent of our leader, Prince Bohemond, mention to him this incident, and add, that not only this but other slight circumstances that have come under my observation, and not now necessary to recapitulate, lead me to suspect that there is in preparation some plan for making a sudden attack upon the entire line of our encampment. Such a warning cannot be misplaced. Meanwhile, I and the soldiers under our

command remain here with the prisoner, in the hope he may be so far restored to life as to answer the few questions I mean to put to him."

Philip of Brefney knelt down by the side of the senseless body; he perceived that the face of the prisoner, now so disfigured and so gashed with wounds, and so hideous with blood, was yet that of a very young man; that the dark, bronzed features were of almost feminine delicacy; that the full lips, now so pallid, disclosed teeth of dazzling whiteness; and that the limbs, though small, were rounded with marvellous beauty; and that the head, from which the covering had fallen, was adorned with long tresses of shining, black hair. Pity touched the breast of Philip for the young wounded infidel; he lifted up the body, so as that the head should lean upon his shoulder, and as he did so, blood, which up to this time had been gathering in the throat of the captive, gushed in a torrent from his mouth; his eyes, which were shaded with long, dark, silken lashes, were raised for a moment to the face of Philip, and then closed again, as he said, whilst his body shivered with pain and cold:—

"Heaven be praised! I am dying."

"Dying! I hope not youth," observed Guy of Mascon; "at least until thou hast answered my questions. I am so glad to hear thee speak. I was afraid my arrow had cut through thy tongue."

A flash of rage and scorn filled the eyes of the captive for an instant, as he looked up at Guy, and said:—"Treacherous old villain, thinkest thou that I shall speak a word with one who has so basely slain me?"

"I forgive thy harsh words, youth," answered Guy; "It is a captive's privilege to slander his conqueror. I shot thee fairly, when thou camest within reach of my post."

"Fairly!" indignantly exclaimed the prisoner. "Is it *fair*, according to the Christian code, to shoot with poisoned arrows? for such is the weapon that has wounded me; I feel that it is so; for again I tell thee that I am dying."

"Let this be my answer to thy accusation," replied Guy, stooping to the earth, and picking up the broken arrow-head. "If such a weapon as this could poison thee, then it too will poison my blood, as it has done thine;" and, as he spoke the word, he drew the point across the back of his hand, and showed the blood fast trickling down from the self-inflicted wound. "Thy countrymen, the Turks," he added, "shoot at us constantly with poisoned missiles; a Christian scorns to use such base weapons, even in a war against infidels."

The captive looked in amazement at the veteran, who thus refuted by bodily pain, the accusation he had made against him, and then turning to Philip, asked:—"Is that the same arrow with which I was wounded?"

"It is," answered Philip. "The arrow was mine, and he took it from my hand to shoot at thee."

"Christian soldier, I have wronged thee by my suspicion. Speak—what wouldst hear of me? Speak quickly, for pain is fast depriving me of my senses; and though thy weapon may not have been poisoned, still I feel that I am slain by it." These words were spoken in broken accents by the prisoner, who again writhed in agony in the grasp of Philip.

"I wish thee," said Guy, "to answer a few questions which I shall put to thee. Answer them candidly, and I promise not only shall thy life be spared, but upon the first convenient opportunity, thou shalt be restored to thy liberty. I make use of no threats to thee, for though thy body be weak, I see thou hast a courageous spirit."

"Ask," said the captive," but ask quickly. All thy questions, but one, I am willing to answer : that one I will not reply to, I care not what may be the consequences."

"Wast thou not," inquired Guy, "the bearer of a message to Antioch, that a sudden attack is about to be made on the Christian camp?"

"I was."

"And when is that attack to be made?"

"At the first dawn of the coming day."

"Is not that attack to be made, in order that, in the confusion produced by it, a convoy of provisions may be sent into the city?"

"It is."

"From what quarter is that convoy of provisions coming?"

"From Araca."

"By what number of warriors is it to be conducted?"

"I am not certain. I think I have heard by twenty thousand horsemen."

"It is well ; it is well," muttered Guy of Mascon ; and now one more question. I wish to know, prisoner, what is thy name, and condition in life?"

"That question I will not answer."

"Then, I may ask, hadst thou any other object in

view than to convey to Antioch that message, of which thou has now told the substance, since thou didst expose thy life to such peril in carrying it?"

"That question, also, I decline to answer. If I were to tell thee that, thou wouldst know my name and condition in life."

"Then it is because it affects thyself, personally, thou wilt not answer such questions?"

"It is."

"I am content, prisoner, thy life is spared; and now to attend to thy cure; for thy wound, though painful, is not dangerous," replied Guy. "Here Philip, conduct this prisoner to the tent of the Benedictines—mind, the tent of the Benedictines in Prince Bohemond's quarters, for there is the best leech in the Crusaders' camp. Say to Father Francis, I hope he will give his especial care to this youth, so as not only to effect his speedy cure, but, if it be possible, to remove from his face all traces of the ugly gashes he now bears. Ho! what a weak boy it is. See—he has again fainted. Thou must bear him on thy back, Philip. There—there. I am interested in the young infidel, now that I have heard him speak. What wicked, assassin-like, demon-black eyes he has, too! He is quite a marvel; for never did I see before such a dauntless spirit, united with such frail nerves. He is as bold with the tongue, as impudent with the look, and as fearful of pain, and as much afraid of the sight of his own blood, as if he were a woman. Hurry, then, away with him to the best leech of all our monks. Remember, Philip, that you take him to the tent of the Benedictines in our Prince Bohe-

mond's quarters. When there, ask for Father Francis; he will look to, and, I have no doubt, cure the young unbeliever; and, perchance, make him sound, both body and soul."

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY OF THE MAN-EATER OF MASCON CONCLUDED.

PHILIP of Brefney departed on the message with which he had been intrusted, and the eye of Guy rested for an instant upon him and the senseless burden he was bearing. A smile of satisfaction lighted up with a momentary gleam the withered features of the old man as he noted the ease and speed with which the youthful Irishman, though so incumbered was hurrying back to the camp. He then turned to a sturdy Saxon, the friend of Hugh of York, and said:—

"Alfred, take thou charge of the hauberk and battle-axe of Philip; better to bear the latter on one's shoulder than have it crack an iron skull-cap in the vain effort to convince thy friend that the holy Peter never felt hunger."

"Better face the battle-axe of a guileless adversary than encounter the poisoned arrow of a cowardly foe, or the still more poisoned tongue of a false friend," replied Alfred. "But where goest thou now, Guy of Mascon? This is the post assigned us. I see no relief coming to supply our place; and

thou forgettest thou hast not yet concluded the tale of thy boyhood which was so strangely interrupted ; it did not, I warrant, finish with thy shooting a bird in the forest, as surely as thou hast wounded that infidel in the waters of the Orontes."

"Of a verity it did not, Alfred ; but I was moving off towards that pilgrim, to see if I could, by any stratagem, induce him to remove the hood from his face. I am somewhat puzzled as to his movements. He has approached marvellously near to us in a short time, and yet, when I before looked upon him, he seemed like one lost in an ecstacy of devotion. He may be a spy, Alfred, concealed under the false garb of a pilgrim, anchorite, or Greek monk, for though his garments are those of a religious, they are not like the habiliments worn by our western cenobites. What sayest thou, Alfred?"

"Be he pilgrim, anchorite, Greek, monk, or spy, I care not," answered Alfred, in a low tone of voice ; "but proceed thou with thy story, and if he be that which thou surmisest, but I do not, then what thou hast to tell of sixty years ago cannot convey to our foes any information that can possibly be of the slightest advantage to them."

"Right," rejoined Guy, in a low whisper, "he is now within hearing of every word spoken aloud, and what he is about to listen to will not afford much edification to him, whilst it may serve to make our brother-soldiers, for the moment, forget the bitter pangs of hunger they are now enduring. Come, comrades, gather again around me, in order that I may conclude my tale of the man-eater of Mascon."

“‘Guy,’ remarked my father to me, ‘you have, I perceive, a quick eye and a steady hand. You are, in sooth, but a child in years, but still I would be more foolish than a child to bring you here, if I did not think you had both sense and discretion to act as you are commanded. Mark, therefore, well what I now say to you. We are now about to enter into the forest of Chatenay; our first visit there shall be to the chapel of St. John; there we shall both kneel down before its altar; there both of us shall say one “Our Father,” three “Hail Mary’s,” and in so doing beg for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and of St. John, that Heaven may protect both in the enterprise in which we are engaged, that God in His mercy may make us, however unworthy, His instruments in saving the innocent from danger, and, if crimes have been committed of bringing the guilty to condign punishment. From the chapel of St. John we shall proceed towards the hut of Peter the woodman; but in proceeding thither it is my intention, from the moment we leave the chapel, to walk about one hundred paces in advance of you, until we come to the spot where you and your companion last saw the woodman, or the man you supposed was the woodman. When you arrive on that spot clap your hands thrice together, and then stop; I shall then turn round so as to be able to take strict notice of the place where you are standing. In that spot you shall remain for half an hour, and if by that time you do not see me return, then be sure some evil has happened, and hurry back with all speed to Mascon; tell the news to your mother, and you may rest assured her clamorous cries will soon send every man

in Mascon, able to bear a sword, to the hut of Peter the woodman. Meanwhile, whilst you are waiting for me, be yourself on the watch, lest you should be taken by surprise; if you hear but a branch break, see that it is no enemy stealing upon you. Do you understand now completely what I have been saying to you?"

"‘Perfectly, father,’ I answered, ‘I shall be as watchful as a dog in pursuit of game.’"

"‘Good,’ answered my father, ‘and like the dog, do not bark whilst you are running it down.’"

"‘I shall be as silent, father,’ I said, ‘as if I were tongue-tied.’"

"‘You promise fairly, Guy, and now let me see, boy, that you are no vain boaster. But tell me, Guy, how shall I know the man you call the woodman if I see him?’"

"‘Oh! very easily, father, he is very like the boy I call his son, except that he has a beard, and his son has no hair on cheek or chin.’"

"‘But I have never seen the son,’ observed my father, smiling, ‘and every boy that has not a beard is not like a man with one. What sort of eyes, forehead, nose, hair, has the son?’"

"‘Oh! father,’ I replied, ‘that is what I mean. I never saw any two like to the father and son but themselves. The son’s eyes are red like a fox’s, and they seem to be set in his head not close to the nose, but at the extremities of his head on each side, as if there were two or three inches between them. The nose of both is long, and red and hooked at the end, and the hair of both is of a blood red colour, and the beard of the father is of the same hue as the hair of

the son, but with this difference, that it so covers all his face, that all you can discern is the hooked red nose, and the wide staring goggling red eyes.'

" 'If Peter the woodman,' laughed my father outright, as he listened to me, 'be at all like your description, he will be very easily recognized; but enough, Guy, of talking for the present. We are now about to penetrate the thickets of the forest, and we must converse no more until our work is finished; let us think on what we have to do, and then do it. Silence Guy—silence, silent prayer, vigilance caution and courage.'

"The directions given by my father were literally attended to. I observed him, as he proceeded on his way to the chapel, cautiously looking around on every side of the beaten path on which we were advancing. At length we reached the chapel, and there entering, we knelt down both close together on the lowest altar step, there said our brief prayers, and then hurried away, stopping but for a single instant at the font, when my father, dipping his right hand into the holy water first made the sign of the cross with his wet finger on my forehead, and then on his own, sighing forth, 'Blessed Virgin and St. John, pray for us!' He then stepped forth into the open air, nodding to me to follow him at the distance he had before indicated.

"There was the stillness of mid-day in the forest as we passed from the chapel on our way to the woodman's hut. The fervent rays of the sun could not penetrate through the thick foliage of the trees, but still there was a glowing heat in the air which seemed to oppress into inaction every description of animal life. There was the silence, if not of death

at least of profound repose around us. The birds were silent, and even the hum of insects had ceased. I felt an indescribable thrill of terror as I observed the ghost-like form of my father moving noiselessly, but slowly forward; and when I reached the spot where I had last seen the woodman, I had scarcely strength to clap my hands as I had been directed.

"My father turned suddenly round as he heard the noise, fixed his eyes steadily on me, then pointing upwards towards the sky, as if bidding me commend myself to the protection of heaven, he blessed himself on the forehead, smiled, and then suddenly disappeared.

"As my father made the sign of the cross on his forehead, so did I, and with that action the momentary tremor that I had experienced seemed to have vanished, not only from my limbs, but my heart; and knowing that I was now alone, utterly and completely alone, in the deep, dark, silent, sultry forest. I felt that I was prepared to meet every peril and to encounter every danger.

"I stood thus, I suppose, for about five minutes, when to my surprise, I heard sounds as if they came from some place under ground. The sounds were like to those of a person singing some merry song. I knelt down as I heard the noise, and still the song continued. I then put my ear close to the ground, but as I did so the noise was no longer to be heard. I concluded, therefore, that from whatever place the singing came, it could not be directly under the spot where I was standing. I proceeded then to walk cautiously around the place, and as I did so I saw that I was much nearer to the back of the woodman's

hut than I had supposed, that the pathway must have made a circular bend, from the place where I last saw my father, towards the hut; and as this thought was passing through my mind, and the words of the song were heard so distinctly by me, that I could recognize the voice of the singer to be my lost companion Ralph, the earth on which I was standing slipped noiselessly, like a trap-door, under my feet, so that at one moment I was standing in the open air in the midst of the forest, and in the next I was in a dark hole under ground, scrambling for a footing amongst a heap of dried bones?

“I gave utterance to no cry as I fell; my first impulse in the midst of the blinding darkness in which I was immersed, was to feel if I had my dagger still safe in its sheath, and next, to try if my bow was uninjured and my arrows unbroken; and as I was so engaged, the merry song of Ralph was going on, but now quite close to my ear; but still the singer remained unseen by me.

“All I could at first discern was a light directly over the hole or trap down which I had fallen, and next that there was light on a level with my eyes at a considerable distance, and like to that which appears to one when standing in the depth of a long cavern, and he looks back towards its mouth by which he had entered.

“At length my eyes became accustomed to the obscurity into which I had been so suddenly and unexpectedly plunged, and one by one the objects around came out, as it were, of the mist in which they had been enshrouded, and were distinctly visible. The first things that attracted my gaze were

the dry bones that lay in a heap beneath me, and I immediately perceived they were the same as those at which I had often looked in the grave-yard at Mascon! There were the legs, and arms, and thigh bones, and skulls of human beings!

"I jumped up with horror from my resting-place, and as I did so, bounded close to a table on which there was lying a skull, white as polished ivory, and on that skull was resting the hand of my companion, Ralph; and there was he, playing with it, and singing to it a merry song, and utterly unconscious, as it seemed to me, either of the place where he was, or what he was doing!

" 'Ralph, Ralph,' said I, 'what is the matter with you? Why are you here? Do you know what you are doing?'

" 'Do I know what I am doing?' answered Ralph. 'Do I know what I am doing, quotha? Do I know what I am doing? he! he!' the poor boy said, giggling like an idiot. 'Do I know what I am doing? He! he! he! Look here, Guy, don't *you* see what I am doing? I am playing with a bird's nest; here it is, the sweet, pretty bird's nest Peter's son promised us. He! he! he! do I know what I am doing? Did you ever see a bird's nest as white as that? Oh! Guy, that jolly good Peter, the woodman, has promised that by this time to-morrow, my own head will be as nice a bird's nest as that, he! he! he! Oh! he is such a good woodman. He has given me such delicious, rose-scented honey, white, fresh honey, too. Here, Guy, taste it; I never was so merry as since I tasted it. Do I know what I am doing, quotha? He! he!'

"I looked on the poor boy, as he spoke to me. He had been a thin, pale, weakly boy at all times ; as gentle, as quiet, and as timid as a little girl ; and yet there he was, in a cavern covered with the bones of the dead, a skull in his hand, his cheeks flushed, his eyes dazzling, and he having all the appearance of a man whose senses were bewrayed by strong drink, or some intoxicating opiate. By the side of the skull, lay, on a fresh green leaf, a flake of honey, seemingly just taken from the hive, and of which he appeared to have eaten but a very small portion.

"I saw that, whatever was the cause, the poor boy's reason was affected, and, therefore, instead of arguing with him, I thought it best to see if I could discover something that might be useful to myself.

" ' Ralph,' said I, ' can you tell me, where I can see the woodman's son ?'

" ' Oh, yes, I can !' he answered ; he is out in the forest looking for *you* and *your father*, and if you both come in by the front door of the hut, you will be nicely trapped. They will bring the two of you down here, and give you such delicious honey—honey like this. Do now taste it, Guy, and then they will put your father into one of the large barrels over there in the corner, and they will make a bird's nest of your head, as they intend to make of mine ! He ! he ! Won't that be rare sport for us, Guy ? But, Guy—I say, Guy, don't you now ask me any more questions, I am becoming so sleepy ; there, Guy, play with my bird's nest whilst I sleep, sleep, sleep, Guy.'

"And as he uttered these words his head fell heavily on his hands, and in a moment afterwards,

his loud snore filled the cavern, as if with an awful sound.

“I had not time to reflect upon all I heard, nor to be, as I most probably would have been, most awfully frightened by it, when I heard the noise of a desperate struggle, as if two strong men were wrestling in a deadly encounter, although no word was uttered by either of them. The struggle continued; there was the thick breathing of men, who were panting in each other’s faces as they grasped one another in a mortal embrace. Then there was a pause, and then a fall which shook the very earth—a silence for an instant, and then there was the shrieking cry of a man in agony—‘Help! help! help! my son—come, come quickly!—stab the villain in the back as he holds me down to the earth, and as I hold him, lest he should slay me. Help! help! help!’

“The words that I heard were not spoken by *my* father. I rushed to where I saw the chink of light; and when I gained it I found it was but the crevice in a thick door opening into the cabin of the woodman, and I had not the strength to open it, for it was bolted on the other side. The crevice, however, was a large one, and enabled me to see the entire room of the cabin; and on the floor, I observed my father, locked in the embrace of the woodman, my father holding the woodman down, but at the same time his arms were grasped close within those of the prostrate man, who was writhing in rage beneath him.

“I drew forth an arrow with the intention of discharging it at the head of the woodman, although

doubtful at the time, that I could inflict any serious injury upon him, when I saw the door of the hut suddenly open, and the woodman's son, with a long sharp knife in his hand, rush in.

“ ‘Hurry! hurry! hurry!’ gasped the woodman, now nearly exhausted by the struggle; ‘run your knife into the back of this villain! he cannot turn upon you, nor harm you. Do not put the knife hurriedly into him, but slowly, lest you should touch upon a bone. Do it well—do it deliberately—drive the knife home; never stop until you have buried it in his flesh, up to the very handle.’

“ ‘I will—I will, father, have——’

“VENGEANCE!”

“The very word the boy spoke,” said old Guy of Mascon, starting up; “but *who* here has now given utterance to it?”

“Not I,” said Alfred of York, “nor any one of your comrades.”

“Then who else could have spoken?” asked the soldier of Mascon.

Alfred pointed to the pilgrim, who again lay with his face resting upon the earth, and was heard, as if in his devotion, giving audible expression to holy thoughts, with the words: “*Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.*”

Guy of Mascon, whose demeanour had become from this time forward more excited than it had been by any of the preceding incidents of the day, now resumed his seat, and thus continued his story:—

“I watched the boy, as his father spoke to him, clench hard his teeth, and walk slowly round the two

men as they lay on the earth before him. He placed his left hand on the back of my father, and went fumbling about with his fingers, as if searching for the spot into which he should plunge his knife; he then paused, and turned the handle of the knife, in order that he might grasp it as a dagger, and give greater strength to the blow; as he did so, I took slow, deliberate, direct aim at him, and as his right hand was in the very act of being uplifted, an arrow transfixed his wrist with such sure force as to drive it not only back, but to send the glittering knife clattering against the wall. In a moment a second arrow scarred his forehead from eye-brow to eye-brow, blinding him with blood; and then a third arrow struck the ruffian father on the floor in the head, and its discharge was followed by the thick dark blood flowing out, and darkening the red hair of the panting savage.

“Almost on the same instant, the shrieks of the father and of the son were heard; and the words they uttered were the same——”

“VENGEANCE.”

“*Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord!*” murmured again the pious pilgrim in the same still action of quiescent devotion.

There was a slight tremor on the lip of old Guy of Mascon, at this renewed interruption, but apparently unattended to by him, as he thus proceeded—

“Up to that moment not one word had been spoken by my father. He had, despite his watchfulness, been suddenly pounced upon from behind by the woodman, on entering the cabin, had struggled with him, and at last, by main strength and activity,

overthrew him, although he could not release his hands so as to use his sword or dagger. He had, without a murmur or cry, perceived the son preparing to inflict a mortal wound upon him; and it was not until he saw the son blinded with his own blood, and marked the agony in the father's face from the wound I had inflicted upon him, that he cried out, 'Bravo, Guy! bravely done, and well aimed! my son, you have saved your father's life.'

"And as he spoke these words he bounded up, rested for an instant on his knee, and as he did so, drew forth a dagger, and passing it quickly behind the legs of the prostrate woodman, he exclaimed—'And now, woodman, thou shalt never again soil God's earth with the print of thy sinful foot.'

"One roar of intense, of harrowing agony, followed this apparently simple act of my father; and then the woodman covered his face with his hands, and lay as a helpless log on the floor of the hut.

"'Where are you, Guy? No longer hide yourself like a timid boy,' said my father; 'all danger is now past, you may come forth in safety.'

"'I am here, father,' I replied, 'and unless you will make way for me, I cannot get to you.'

"'Oh! my brave, good, manly boy,' said my father, approaching the door, unbolting it, and as he did so, taking me up in his arms, and kissing me a hundred times, 'how came you into such a hole as that?'

"'Come with me, father,' I said, 'and I will explain all to you, and show you poor Ralph.'

"'Poor Ralph,' said my father, turning pale as I spoke the words. 'Poor Ralph! Is the boy then dead?'

“ ‘Oh ! no—no, not dead ; but there is something the matter with him which I do not understand. Come—come with me—but are you not afraid that the wicked woodman may rise again and try to slay you ?’

“ ‘Do not fear that, Guy ; Peter the woodman is now hamstrung. He can no more move from where he lies, than if he were a corpse stretched upon its bier. But what has become of the wicked imp, his son ? Oh ! I perceive by this trickling blood along the floor, he has fled from the hut. When we require him he can be easily tracked by his filthy gore ; and if he were to live for a hundred years, you, I can tell you, Guy, have put a mark upon his face by which he can ever be from henceforth easily recognized. But come now to see poor Ralph, and then to examine into every nook and corner of this abode of wickedness. We can do so leisurely, and we can do so unmolested. But hist ! hist ! what heavy moaning, snoring sound is that ?’

“ ‘It is Ralph,’ I replied ; ‘that wicked man has given him some honeycomb, which I fear has poisoned him.’

“ ‘Poison !’ exclaimed my father ; poison a poor helpless child ! Oh ! no, no, Guy ; the worst crimes have a cause, and there could be no motive so to get rid of a child ; but that awful snoring noise is not made by a child ; it comes from a full grown man or woman ; but we shall find it out before we leave the hut. Come, now, first show me where is Ralph.’

“ With these words I led my father into the dark cavern, pointed out to him the place down which I had fallen, and then, when his sight had become

accustomed to the obscurity, brought him over to the corner where Ralph lay buried in a profound sleep.

“My father first placed his hand on the boy’s heart, then marked attentively his breathing, and then, looking up to me, said, ‘His blood flows regularly and healthily, his breath comes naturally, there is no poison here.’

“‘Then why,’ I asked, ‘is he buried in such a profound sleep? wherefore did he talk so much of the honey they had given him? why fancy a dead man’s skull to be a bird’s nest?’

“My father appeared puzzled by the questions I put to him; he examined the boy’s fingers, which were still clammy with the honey; he then examined the honey, smelt it, but did not taste it, and then exclaimed :

“‘Now, Guy, I understand it all. The woodman, doubtless, is a magician; he is one of those vile wretches who still breathe the air of heaven, and yet have sold themselves, body and soul, to the great enemy of mankind; who, in exchange for their eternal happiness, have acquired the means whereby they may, for a certain period of time, delude the senses of their fellow-mortals. The man is a magician, and he has practised some of his hellish arts on this poor boy. This, then, is a case which is beyond the skill of an ignorant layman; it is for a learned, holy, pious priest to solve such a difficulty. The knowledge and the piety of the good monks will speedily baffle all those hellish wiles. I shall, therefore, bear the boy in my arms to the monastery of St. Vincent, and sure I am that from thence he will be restored in perfect health to his afflicted parents; and with the

boy I shall take this honey, so that they may see of what magic materials it is compounded. The wisdom of the Church, Guy, is always mightier and stronger than the cunning of the devil. And look here, my boy, and see to what degradation Beelzebub is always sure to reduce his votaries; see how this wretch—*this magician*—for such I am now sure he is, having parted with his hope of heaven—that which God himself purchased for us all with His blood—see how, to satisfy his sinful passions, and gratify his gross propensities, having forsaken the Church, and forsworn her saving sacraments, he is now reduced to the condition of the most ferocious beast, and takes pleasure in feeding upon human flesh! Look, we cannot stir a step without crunching the bones of some baptized Christian he has devoured; and, look here—oh! horrible and monstrous sight—these barrels are filled with the mangled limbs of men and women, and these are preserved in brine, so that his foul appetite may always be supplied with a food which cannot be thought of or named without loathing. Come, Guy, come from this place, come at once, for there is contamination even in contemplating the foul deeds of this abominable cannibal.’

“We hurried out of the cavern into the room where the woodman lay helpless, writhing with agony, his hands still covering his face, and he uttering not one word—no, not even a single groan. My father bore the sleeping Ralph on his shoulder, but the boy’s sleep was now as tranquil as an infant’s; as placid, as gentle, and as profound.

“There was the stillness of death in the apartment as we returned to it. My father, who carried Ralph on his left arm, said to me :

“‘Come, boy, now first to the monastery of St. Vincent, to deposit there the sleeping Ralph; then to his parents, to tell them he has been recovered, and where he may be found; then to our own home, to allay the fears of your mother; then to the good Count William, in order that he may arrest and convey this malefactor to the stake, as a magician and a murderer. And now, Guy, as we leave this apartment, do you as I do, and repeat the words after me.’

“And so saying he made the sign of the cross as he looked down upon the prostrate man, and exclaimed:

“‘The cross of Christ be between me and you, and every other evil spirit.’

“He spoke the words, and was on the point of turning out of the door of the hut, when again we heard——”

The shrill, long, monotonous blast of a trumpet, issuing from the Christian encampment, thrilled with its shrieking sound the group of listening soldiers.

Guy of Mascon, and all his armed comrades, started to their feet.

“The time for story-telling is at an end; the moment for action has come. Back, back, men, with all speed to our quarters. Hark! the signal for recall is now sounding from every side of the camp. Away—away, Alfred of York; carry thou the hauberk and battle-axe of Philip of Brefney. Before the sun has set the latter will, I hope, be deep set in the brain of an unbeliever. An unbeliever, Alfred—not, like thy friend, an unbeliever in Peter the Hermit—but a gross, sanguinary, ruthless, Mahommedan unbeliever. Away! away!”

The words of Guy were followed with the regular, heavy, although quiet, tramp of well-disciplined soldiers; and in a brief space of time there was no living thing discernible between the outermost entrenchments of the Christian camp and the waters of the Orontes but one, and that one was the person described by Guy as a pilgrim, anchorite, or Greek monk; as one whose dress showed that he was devoted to a religious life, although not one of those best known in the Western Church.

The outward garment of this person was a coarse, long, heavy grey cloak, which fell in large and ample folds from the shoulder, and beneath it was a loose tunic, which, fitting closely at the neck, descended to the middle of the leg, and was confined at the waist by a long thin girdle of brown cloth, which was circled in several folds around the body. Beneath the tunic were discernible loose trowsers, which were fastened to purple-colored sharp-toed buskins. Attached to the cloak was a deep hood, which, when drawn over the face, was provided with orifices, enabling the wearer to see through them as he walked, and that, when cast back, served to cover a small scrip in which the religious bore his scanty stock of provisions. The habiliments were those precisely of a Greek monk of Mount Athos; and, like to those monks, the person here described wore a hood, and beneath the hood a close-fitting cap, which covered not only his ears, but even the entire of his forehead to the very eyes. Like to the same monks, this man, who was now far advanced in years, and must, of course, be supposed long since to have made his profession, looked as if his white hair and

beard had never been clipped, whilst his thin, long, unwashed fingers, which grasped a thick pilgrim's staff, seemed to be the claws of a wild animal, for they were provided with nails that appeared to have never been cut, and that were as black, as long, and apparently as strong as those of a tiger, when it unsheathes them in its raging hunger to seize upon and devour its prey.

So long as Guy of Mascon was telling the tale of what had occurred to him when a boy, the pilgrim monk remained with his face to the earth, and his arms outstretched, as if he had been absorbed in devotion ; but now, when the retreating steps of the soldiers had been followed by a complete silence of all around him, he rose slowly from his prostrate position, and resting upon his knees, as if he were in prayer, he let fall his pilgrim staff from his hands, and then drawing the folds of the hood which covered his head close to his breast, so as to peep out from the holes, he turned slowly, slowly—to a person gazing at a distance, imperceptibly—round, so as to be sure that from no part of the horizon was there an eye gazing upon him ; and when convinced that such was the case, he sprang with the vigor of youth to his feet, and cast back his hood.

The face, or at least so much of it as was discernible, was an awful one to look upon ; for its expression rendered the naturally hideous, ugly features those of a demon stirred into rage by the burning flames of hell. No portion of the forehead was discernible ; the dark, close-fitting, Greekish monk-cap covered forehead and eyebrows, but from the rim of the cap seemed to spring a thick, promi-

nent nose, red as fire, and at each side of the head, wide-set apart from one another, were two staring eyes, which seemed to look, not straight forward, but to each side, at the same time that they cast out vivid flashes, as of fire, whilst all the rest of the face was covered with ashy white hair, which, starting from the head, started out in thick masses, so as to cover rather than descend upon the breast as a beard.

A full and willing vent seemed now to be given by this hideous man to the rage which he had hitherto been concealing beneath the mockery of a seeming devotion. It was as if he had invited a demon to take possession of him; that the evil spirit had come at his bidding, and no longer left him master of himself. His words were occasionally shrieks, and he moved up and down with the uneasy lurking paces, broken by occasional bounds of fury, such as are exhibited by a wild animal of the forest when first confined within the narrow precincts of a cage.

“Vengeance! vengeance! vengeance!” he exclaimed. “Yes, *that* was the word, spoken in the woodman’s cave in the forest of Chatenay, Vengeance!—that was the word spoken in the ear of the cruel William, Count of Arles and Duke of Burgundy, when he brought dishonour on the humble but honest home of Walter of Arles, and forced him to become Peter the woodman, Peter the magician, Peter the man-eater in the forest of Chatenay. Vengeance!—ay, that too was the word spoken when the same William pined a prisoner in the power of Robert of France, and died bereft of dukedom and countship, a beggar dependant upon the bounty of others. Vengeance!—yes, it was the very

word spoken by the poor boy, when, blinded with his own blood, he felt he was no longer able to defend his father's life. Vengeance!—yes, it was the very last word spoken by Peter the woodman when he felt the fire reaching his vitals—the last word he spoke before they burned him like a log of wood and dispersed his ashes in the air. Vengeance!—ay, and it has come upon them, and will come upon them, one and all. Has this old braggart, who now makes a child's story of such events, has he, too, forgotten that they did not end with the discovery of the bodies of the murdered travellers in Peter the woodman's hut; nor with the recovery of those who were unhurt and sleeping, and whose snores he heard, because a narcotic draught had been given to them, and whose worthless lives *he* saved? Vengeance!—has it not, though he bears a charmed life, pursued *him* and *his* from that day to this? How died his father? Slain, not like a soldier but a coward, with an arrow in his back from a sure but unsuspected hand. How died his mother? By slow poison—so slow, they deemed it sickness, but so sure, that she knew from the moment she imbibed it, although she never breathed a suspicion of the fact but to the priest, that it was death, death, death,—inevitable death. And how comes it, that he is now a childless old man! Vengeance! vengeance! vengeance! in various forms; in the river, in the forest, in the field, in the house; but still death as certain as if they had, like Ralph the boy, who died an idiot, eaten of the opiate honeycomb, or had lain quiescent for a minute with bared neck beneath the short knife of Peter the woodman. Vengeance! vengeance

vengeance!—oh! it is a true word, and it lives and thrives, and ever bears fruit in the breast of an injured man. Vengeance!—it lies in wait for Guy of Mascon. Vengeance!—it lies in wait for Florine of Burgundy, the buxom grand-daughter of him who first did wrong to Peter the woodman. Vengeance awaits the footsteps of the betrothed bride who comes as a crusader in Jerusalem, and who hopes, with the rescue of the Holy City from the hands of infidels, that Heaven will bless her union with Swein of Denmark. Vengeance!—ay, vengeance upon all who have aided, and all who may approve of the shedding of the blood, of the burning to death of Peter the woodman. Vengeance upon the persecutors of magicians. Vengeance upon the whole of those who bear the name of Christian, for Christianity has destroyed the power of him who first told man that earth was made for man, and showed him the arts by which he would extort from nature her richest secrets. Vengeance! vengeance! vengeance!”

And as the wretched, wicked old man spoke these words, there came to his ears the loud, joyous burst of thousands of men, all shouting with one voice:—“God wills it! God wills it.”

“He turned fiercely round towards the distant Christian encampment, and there was an execration in his fierce glance as he gazed upon it, and then a sneer curled his lip, as he exclaimed:—

“As a magician, and the son of a magician,” he said, “I am superstitious, and attach credence to omens. I have cried ‘*vengeance*,’ and you exclaim ‘*God wills it*.’ Be it so—and now to realize as a fact against yourselves, your desire to do evil to

others, I shall speed the news I have learned to Baghi Sian, so that he may know all that the spy, who was arrested this day, would have desired to tell him."

CHAPTER V.

THE THREE VILLAINS.

BEYOND the encampment of the Christians, and in that quarter the farthest removed from the walls of Antioch, there was perched a miserable hamlet, which hung upon the very brink of a deep ravine, filled with bare rocks, and by whose rugged base there struggled a scanty stream, the trickling whispering sound of which might be occasionally heard as the water feebly forced its ways through some narrow fissure. The front of the disjointed and badly-covered huts—too poverty-stricken ever to attract the attention of the enemy—looked towards the Christian encampment, and the backs of the same huts were directly overlooking the wild ravine.

The huts we have described were the dwelling-places of the mendicants who had followed the Crusaders' army from Europe, and who clung to its movements, whether its career had been marked by triumphs or disasters—not aiding in the former, and aggravating the evils of the latter. Over this motley band, there was a recognized leader—recognized not merely by themselves, but even in the camp of the Crusaders, as the person through whom commu-

nications were to be made from their superiors, as to when the army was about to move, and when it was determined to entrench itself for a time in any particular place. The person thus placed in authority over his fellows was designated as "the Beggar King" and the only distinction between his habitation and that of his associates was, that his hut was in the centre of all the rest, and that attached to its door-post was a large satchel or bag, in which was expected to be dropped the dole or alms of those whom curiosity, or the necessity of travelling by that road, brought through the hamlet of the beggars.

To the door of this hut was seen approaching, with rapid strides, in about an hour after the occurrence of the incidents described in the last chapter, a pilgrim Greek monk. He stopped for an instant at the door to feel the pendent scrip, and then dashing it with fury against the door-post, he exclaimed:—

"It is like the charity of Christians—the semblance of what ought to be done, and is left undone—a pretence—hollow, empty, valueless."

With these words he entered the hut, bolted the door behind him, then disarrayed himself of his pilgrim's garb, and appeared in his true character—an aged beggar, far advanced in years, but not stricken down by infirmity—his garments ragged, his feet naked, but his head and forehead and eye-brows still covered with the close-fitting black cap.

"And now," said he, "to meet with my fitting associates—the Christian Greek, who is ready to betray his God to please his prince; and the Ismaëlian Turk, who is prepared to for-swear his prophet at the command of his chief, and to win what he calls Para-

dise, by practising perjury, and committing murder. Let us see, if they who will not be true in virtue, can be relied upon for their adherence to sin."

As the old man spoke, he opened a door which looked down upon the dark ravine, and from which a person would suppose that to step one foot beyond the threshold, was to cast one's-self down a precipice of at least a hundred feet. Such was not the case with the old man, who was acquainted with the locality. From the door-way his foot descended to a narrow, jutting rock, and thence, in the same manner, having closed the door by which he had gained the open air, he descended slowly and noiselessly as a cat approaching its prey, from rock to rock, for about a distance of sixty feet, until he at length came on a level with a cavern, the entrance to which was so narrow, that it barely afforded room for the admission of a single man at a time.

Once the entrance had been thus gained, there was an easy access to the cavern, which ran slanting upwards, by a gradual ascent within the hill in which it had been formed, swelling out into a wide arch in the centre, and then narrowing off into what was at first an obscure, but finally, an utterly dark passage, still leading upwards, as if it opened in some distant but topmost part of the hill.

Within the cavern the old man found the two persons he had expected to meet there. The one was a Greek—the other a Turk. The Greek was seated at a low table, on which were two flasks of wine. The Turk was sitting cross-legged on the floor, and beneath him was a cloak lined with rich fur. Around the apartment were arranged—but still in different

heaps, some large, some small—an heterogenous collection of various articles. In one heap, for instance, were to be seen swords, helmets, full suits of Turkish and Christian armour, with scimitars, daggers, chalices, altar-cloths, vestments; in another heap, the same articles, but in smaller quantities; in another, a Christian standard, and the caparison of a Turkish horseman; in another, nothing more than a chalice; in another, a lady's festive dress, with rings and bracelets, and nought else beside these. It seemed to be a store-house in which individuals, or a company of individuals, had deposited the plunder which they had acquired alone, or in separate gangs; and such, in fact, was the cavern in which the old man now met with the Greek and the Turk.

The Greek and Turk awaited the coming of the old man in complete silence. It was not possible to say what was the precise motive for their silence. It might be, that his rich velvet tunic, and gold-embroidered sandals, and jewel-hilted dagger, made the Greek, Alexander, whose dark skin was flushed, and his bright, black eyes flashed with excitement from the wine he was imbibing, fancy himself superior to the man who squatted before him in coarse cloth jacket, and still more coarse leggings. The cause for this silence might be pride on one side, and humility on the other; or it might be the national repulsion that ever existed between the two races—the Greek hating the Turk, the Turk ever despising the Greek; whatever the cause, and the explanation for it may be found hereafter, both, from the moment they entered the cavern, had observed as absolute a silence as if each were unconscious of the other's presence.

The old man had in his slow and noiseless descent strained his hearing to its utmost watchfulness, in the hope of catching a single syllable before he should be seen by those who awaited his coming. He had listened in vain; for, in truth, not a syllable had been uttered. He stopped again at the entrance; the silence still continued. There appeared to him to be in this silence an ominous proof of some preconcerted plan between the two, and in the hope he might detect an exchange of glances between them, he suddenly appeared before them. He looked first at the Greek; but in the handsome, regular, and smiling face of the citizen of Constantinople he could discern nought but an earnest admiration of the rich wine as it sparkled and bubbled into the silver goblet from the flask. He next looked at the Turk; but in his thin, fleshless features, and in his wild haggard eye, as he gazed upwards, there was no expression discernible to show that aught had disturbed his deep reverie but the appearance of the old man himself.

"Alexander," said the old man, addressing the Greek, "do you not know Selim? or knowing him have you quarrelled with him?"

"I know Selim so well," replied the Greek, "that he is the last man in the world I would willingly quarrel with."

"And you, Selim," inquired the old man of the Turk, "why are you so silent?"

"I never speak but on business," answered Selim, "and drinking is not business."

"But it is a very pleasant occupation, I can tell you, Selim," remarked the Greek. "Experience teaches, as the poet says; try it, and you will never willingly abandon it."

"Oh! I perceive *you* can talk now *together* that *I* am here to listen to you," remarked the old man, his suspicion as to some preconcerted plot being now confirmed. "Why, Alexander, were you not so merry over the wine cup when I was not present?"

"The ancients always arranged their banquet couches to hold three; three constitutes a company; three is the number of the Graces: but there is no harmony, no sociability in two: two represents man and wife, and every couple like a married couple is, as you must be aware, if you were ever married, always dull." Such was the laughing reply given by Alexander to the morose question put to him.

"You banter well, Alexander," continued the old man, still pertinaciously adhering to his question; "but why, I ask you, were you not talking with Selim?"

"Because *I* would not talk with him," said Selim, in an angry tone. "He was profaning in my presence one of the laws of my prophet. I endured it, for your sake. Did you expect me, when you asked me here, to countenance it also, by familiar discourse with a sinner committing a sin? and, now, I tell you, I will speak neither to him nor to you, until the wine is removed from my sight."

"Wait a moment," remarked Alexander, "and I promise you that you shall never again see a drop of it;" and with these words, he emptied the flask into the goblet, gulphed the liquor down with a single draught, and then casting the wine flasks from the table, he dashed them with a single kick, into a dark corner, and turning to the old man, said:—"I appeal to you, could Selim himself have treated a wine-flask with more contempt than I have?"

"Enough of fooling," remarked the old man; "and now, for a matter which will be alike interesting to both of you to hear, and the reason why I have requested both to meet me in this place. A Turkish spy has been arrested to-day at one of the outposts, bearing to the Governor of Antioch intelligence that an attack will be made on the Christian encampment at the dawn of the coming day, for the purpose of sending a convoy of provisions into the beleaguered city. The army and the provisions are both coming from Araca. The leaders of the Crusaders are by this time aware of the project, and I wished to see you here, in order that as you have both an interest in bringing to nought the enterprise of the Christians, you might with me devise the means whereby Godfrey of Bouillon and his followers may derive no advantage from the intelligence they have thus unluckily gained."

"An army with provisions, marching from Araca to Antioch!" observed Selim, pausing upon every word he said. "From Araca, did you say old man?"

"Yes, from Araca. I am sure I heard the word Araca."

"And led by whom?" again inquired Selim.

"I heard not that," said the old man.

"They know nought of such an expedition at Antioch," remarked Selim.

"That I am sure of," answered the old man; "and therefore have I desired to see you here, to impart information you could not otherwise have acquired."

"An army coming with provisions from Araca to

the relief of Antioch ! Are not these, old man, your very words ?” again inquired Selim.

“ Yes, I repeat them, an army coming with provisions to the relief of Antioch,” said the old beggar.

“ From Araca ?”

“ Aye—from A-ra-ca,” repeated the old man, and in his irritation making a distinct word of every syllable.

“ From Araca !” again repeated the imperturbable Selim. He paced up and down the cave two or three time, and then turning, so as to stand directly face to face with the beggar, he again uttered the words :—

“ You said from Araca ?”

“ I did ; and, if necessary, I will repeat it a hundred times to you.” observed the beggar.

“ You need not—but I wished to be quite sure as to what you said,” replied Selim. “ My reason for asking you is, that the story you tell is very improbable.”

“ Aye, and,” chimed in Alexander, “ how do you yourself, old man, know that it is true ?”

“ Aye,” repeated Selim, “ how do you yourself, old man, know that it is true ?”

To these questions the old man at first gave no reply ; his furious passions choked his utterance ; his fingers, trembling with the excitement that agitated him, seemed to be searching for some deadly weapon, in order that he might allay his fury by the sight of the blood of those who, it appeared to him, had conspired together to taunt, annoy, and jibe him. He turned away to hide from them the deadly loathing against both, which was then fer-

menting in his heart, and that he was conscious must be discernible in his features, if they watched the expression of his eyes.

The terrible old man had long since cast away the grace of God from him—he had done so wilfully—he had done so, in order that he might indulge his hatred against those who had in any way offended or injured him, or that he fancied had done so; and now the sins which he had made his servants, had become his masters, and reason and will, those two great gifts from God to man, were under the control of violent passions, instead of being, as they should be, his guides to lead him from earth to heaven.

The old man was conscious of his weakness when passion beset him, and hence the struggle to which he had now to submit to conceal the evil thoughts that were lurking in his bosom; he knew that to give them vent would be to place himself within the power of two men stronger than himself; whereas, by concealing them now, he might hereafter, and when opportunity served, and no peril be incurred, take ample and full revenge upon those he fancied to be his tormentors, for the agony which he was then suffering; and making in his own bad heart a compact with the evil spirit to do some hellish deed at a future time, he invoked its aid now, to enable him to conceal his hatred against those he, at that moment doomed as victims.

He stood in the presence of men who watched him too well to permit him to perceive they suspected he entertained any evil designs against them.

The old man, by a violent effort, mastered the

expression of his feelings, and turning to the Turk, he said :—

“You ask me, good Selim, how I know the story I told you to be true? Well, I can answer you. I can at once produce a witness to corroborate it.”

“At once produce a witness to corroborate your story about a convoy, and Araca, and an army marching to the relief of Antioch! Fine, old, intelligent man, you are pleased to be jocose, and to speak in riddles. Who is your witness? Let us see him, talk with him, interrogate him, hear his voice. Be so good as to mention his name,” observed the Greek.

“I do so willingly; had I a mirror I would let *you* look at him, for my witness is Alexander of Constantinople,” said the old man.

“*I*, and *your* witness! *I*, that you have summoned here to listen to your Araca tale, a witness to the truth!” cried Alexander, in amazement, and no longer speaking in his usual jibing tone.

“Yes, *you*, even you, if it be true, as I suppose, that you have come from the quarters of Bohemond, and that you have been in the Benedictines’ tent at any time this day,” said the old beggar.

“I have come,” stated the Greek, “direct from the Benedictines’ tent. I was speaking to the most celebrated leech in the Crusaders’ army, Father Francis, at the moment that I heard the preconcerted signal from your messenger that you wished to see me here; and stating this, I am bound to say, nothing occurred, in my presence within my hearing, or has come to my knowledge—and it is my main occupation to pick up information wherever I can

find it—and yet, I repeat, there was not one single incident to give the slightest corroboration to your story.”

“What !” said the old man, “was there not in the Benedictine’s tent a captive prisoner shot through both cheeks this morning?”

“Not one,” replied the Greek.

“Could there have been without your knowledge?” asked the beggar.

“Most assuredly not,” replied the Greek. “I was in the tent yesterday speaking to the sick. I know the names of every man of them, and so does my master, the emperor, by this time. I take care to apprise him of the daily increasing weakness in the Crusaders’ camp. I was in the tent this morning, even as I now left the encampment, and I know there has been no additional patient received there up to the time I passed beyond the entrenchments.”

“This is strange! very strange! it is almost marvellous!” said the old man, confounded by the information now given to him. “Is it possible that you, being so long with Father Francis, the Benedictine, this morning, did not hear from him one word about a captive sent to his especial care from the outposts.”

“Not one single word; all I heard Father Francis say about a newly-wounded person at all to-day had reference to some female who had been wounded in a strange manner, and who was either one of the attendants, or in the care of the attendants of the Princess Gunhilda, the wife of Duke Baldwin of Boulogne. As the story had reference to a female, I did not, I must own, pay any attention to it.”

"Strange, and still more strange," remarked the old man. "Do those Christians practise magic, and yet pretend to execrate it? Perchance so, for they are hypocrites in everything. They declaim against avarice, and yet hoard money; they extol mercy and decapitate prisoners; they laud abstinence in the midst of rich feasts, and denounce drunkenness, whilst they are swilling wine. Judge of them by their words, and they are all saints; estimate them by their deeds, and they are on a level with demons. But, pardon me, Alexander, if I ask you another question. Did you not hear in the tent of the Benedictines, or from Father Francis himself, anything of an especial message sent to him from Guy of Mascon?"

"Guy of Mascon? Guy of Mascon?" repeated the Greek. "I never even heard the name before."

"Would that I could say the same," said the old man in a voice trembling with emotion, and showing that there was still one tender fibre in that heart that had become old and withered in iniquity. "Alas! that I too never had heard that name, then I should never have seen——But no matter, it is past, *he* still lives, but lives to have suffered, and shall so continue until——Pardon me, I forgot what I wished to speak about; there is some strange mistake here."

"There is a mistake," remarked Selim, "a great mistake, and it is yours."

"Mine!" said the old man.

"Yes, yours; and I think I can explain to you how it happened. I have come," continued Selim, "as lately from the beleaguered city of Antioch as Alexander from the camp of the besiegers. I know that from Araca there is neither an army expected

nor a store of provisions looked for; but secret intelligence has reached the governor of Antioch that new allies for the Crusaders' camp are on their march from Constantinople to Antioch; that these allies are conveying with them an abundant store of provisions; that the convoy is protected by not less than fifteen hundred horsemen, the very flower of the chivalry of Denmark, and that all are under the command of the Danish Prince Swein, the heir to the throne, and his betrothed bride, the beauteous Burgundian princess, the only daughter of Eudes, the first of that name who has reigned as supreme prince over the rich cities and fertile fields of the wide-spread provinces of Burgundy. According to the last intelligence received of them they were making their way through the narrow defiles of Cappadocia."

"So far upon their way as *that*," said the old man. "Why are they not long since annihilated? Oh! for the vigour and the strength of youth, that I might equip me as a knight, and in the midst of her fifteen hundred lances transpierce—because it would be the greater agony to her to behold the sight—first Swein, and then the fair Florine herself, and that, as she expired, she might hear the death-knell of her foul race ringing in her ears, and expressed in the single word—*vengeance*."

"And even if you were still twenty-five years younger than you are," said Selim, "I would pray of you to pause, and not lay one hostile finger upon Swein, for *he* is *my* destined victim. Whilst he was still a boy, and serving as one of the northmen princes in the Varangian guard at Constantinople, he laid his impious hand upon the sacred person of our

chief, Hassan, the son of Sabbak, then a visitor at the court of the Greek Emperor, denounced him, who in holiness is next to Mahomet, as an imposter; and in the presence of emperor, nobles, foreigners, and Greeks, struck him, our lord, our *Seidouna*, to the earth! That blow has to be avenged. I am but a *fedaï*, that is, a devoted follower of the *Cheik Aljebal* or *old man of the mountain*. In my hand has been placed the knife to slay him. I am but one amongst ten *fedaïs* destined to perform the same task. If he come *here* I am to do it, or *from hence* to follow him until it is done. And happy, thrice happy, shall I be if I lose my life in executing my task, for then is there at once opened to me, and for ever, a paradise such as pale-faced Christianity has never dreamed of; then shall my senses for ever rejoice in celestial bliss; then shall I traverse the seventy thousand meadows of saffron, with as many abodes of pearl, and as many palaces of topaz, with golden saloons, and silver tables, and exquisite dishes, and purple pavilions, and domes of amber, and streams of milk and honey, and——”

“No wine,” remarked the sneering Greek.

“I ask pardon—*your* pardon, especially, Alexander, for you believe in nothing,” replied the usually placid-seeming Selim, “I was but explaining why it was that if the old man had the Prince of Denmark within reach of a lance, as he was but this moment wishing, I would ask of him to arrest his hand in order that the fatal blow might be struck by me.”

“I care not for Swein,” replied the old man. “Neither he nor his have ever done wrong to me or mine; but it is not so with the Princess Florine. Against her, especially, is my enmity directed.”

"I care not for either," remarked the Greek. "All I desire is the death of both, and with them the death of every interloping Crusader who has come hither to interfere with the dominion, or diminish the authority, or lessen the respect due to my lawful sovereign, the Greek Emperor. This is what I wish both to attend to. If Selim gains that which he calls paradise by the knife, and you win revenge in blood, you will attain the object of your desires, whilst it is my wish to help you both, because in so doing I render a service to the emperor who employs me, and the emperor in return bestows upon me the means whereby I may enjoy all those pleasures in which I take most delight. That the old man has mistaken the message of the spy—if there was a spy—I entertain no doubt; but still, as in the midst of that very disjointed and highly improbable story there may be a particle of truth, which the governor of Antioch may track out, I think there can be no harm in mentioning it."

"Well, well, perhaps I may allude to it," replied Selim.

"Perhaps you may!" said the old man, his passions becoming again excited. "Perhaps *you may*, forsooth! Conceal it from the governor of Antioch, if you dare."

"Dare!" sneeringly remarked Selim. "Dare! to a man who counts his own life of less value than that of the meanest reptile that crawls the earth; dare! to one who has no other thought before his eyes but how soon his spirit may, first bathed in the blood of a victim, be permitted to range through the seventy thousand saffron fields, and the abodes of mother of

pearl, and the palaces of topaz, and golden saloons, and purple pavilions, and streams of milk and honey, and——”

“No wine,” chimed in ‘the Greek. “What two madmen are there here? The one is mad about a fairy dream, the other is mad about revenge, whilst——”

“You are yourself,” remarked the old man, “more mad than either, for you are mad with sensuality. Your idol is yourself, and your senses the foul instruments whereby you worship the foulest of images. But you are jovial withal. I must contrive *some dainty dish* to please so delicate and so nice an appetite.”

“Thanks! thanks! honest, good old man,” said the laughing Greek. “But remember for the future, when trying to act the spy, you are able to hear distinctly what is——”

A loud rolling noise, like that of thunder, rushed suddenly across the entrance of the cavern, and then breaking off as suddenly, a few harsh, hollow noises were heard, and all remained quiescent.

“A stone has been cast from the top of the ravine to the bottom, to make us aware,” observed the old man, “that the presence of some one here is required in the hamlet; let us all, then, depart. On, on, both of you; I shall follow quickly as possible;” and the old man muttered between his teeth, as he hobbled after them, “and as soon as possible, too, I shall make you both feel the bitter consequences of your jibes and sneers, and the manner in which you have sought to deprive me of the gain that should be bestowed upon me for the valuable intelligence I this day procured for the besieged of Antioch.”

So hastened the old man after his two companions: Such were his thoughts of them, and such his hostile intentions towards them.

Once the path upwards through the cavern was pointed out to them, both hastened on their way; but as they did so, they cast not one glance on the rich and valuable articles that were scattered around them. If there was a common thought, or a settled design between them, it was as little expressed in words as in looks. It was not until both were in profound obscurity, and that they could, in the narrow, dark path in which they were, neither see the other, that their hands met, and a strong, hard, cordial, mutual pressure passed between them.

Was this suspicious action noticed by the old man? They believed, and hoped, and would have been perfectly certain it could not have attracted his attention; but that at the moment that they shook hands, there was heard, on a sudden, the old man's short, dry cough.

He made no remark. They said not a word to him, and when the three emerged into the open air, there was the same silence between the three, as strict, and it might be even termed, as morose, as that which had already been remarked upon by the old man, when Turk and Greek were alone, and he, from their silence, suspected there was some important plot in hand either directed against himself, or from which it was determined he should be excluded.

A wrong or an offence was (as he supposed) in contemplation, and for either the real or the imagined injury he was preparing the means of defending himself, or of exacting a bitter and complete revenge.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST CRUSADERS.

"How feelest thou, now, my child? Better, I hope; not suffering pain. What! tears! thy young lips fastened with kisses to my weak, sinful hand. For shame! my sweet girl; speak, let me, I entreat thee, hear thee speak."

"Then, if I must speak, it will be nought but thanks—thanks to Heaven—thanks to you, noble princess, for to you I am indebted for life, and that which is dearer to me than life."

Such was the conversation that passed between two females, the one apparently in the first bloom of maiden womanhood, and the other a matron seemingly of queen-like rank or royal birth, for on her forehead, and binding her rich, abundant yellow hair, was a circlet of gold encrusted with gems, and her long robe of purple velvet, which descended from her neck to her ankles, was confined at the waist by a girdle of gold, which dazzled the sight by the number and brilliancy of diamonds and other precious stones that covered it. The snow white, thin hand of the matron was clasped within the small, dark-coloured, and crimson tipped fingers of the maiden, who, as she lay upon a couch, raised from time to time her full, large, black eyes, and finely chiselled features, beaming with love and reverence towards the lady who sat by her side, and watched her with a care which might be truly designated maternal.

"Yes," continued the maiden, whose cheeks, and hair, and head were confined by snow white bandages, making her dark complexion look still more dark, on account of the contrast, whilst they, at the same time, set forth the delicate texture of the skin, and the striking beauty of her features. "Yes, to you, lady, I owe more than life, for you have preserved me from the contamination of a camp. I should have died of shame had the secret of my disguise been discovered by low and brutal soldiers."

"Say not so, my dearest child," observed the matron. "It was thy misfortune to be wounded and made a captive; but with these sad events the worst fate that could happen had overtaken thee. There is, I hope, not a single soldier in this camp, the meanest, humblest, lowest, poorest man amongst them—there is not one of all those thousands who does not ever bear in mind that he left his home, however poor or however rich that home might be, with none other than a religious motive—to honour God, to honour the Son of God, to honour the Mother of God: to honour God by sacrificing all the world holds dear to Him who is the Creator of us all; to honour the Son of God, by rescuing the places of His nativity and His death from the hands of infidels; and to honour the Mother of God, by practising in such an expedition all those virtues which are most dear to her, and for which she was conspicuous in the sight of Heaven and of earth—her humility, her purity, and spotless life that knew not even the stain of sin. Ah! no, my dear child, think not that thou owest any special debt of gratitude to me. The brave men who fight the battle of the cross in the field would,

be assured, treat thee, once knowing thee to be what thou art, a young and innocent maiden, as tenderly, as kindly, and as lovingly as the women of the Crusaders' camp, amongst whom thou hast been placed by the special desire of the holy Adelmar, Bishop of Puy."

"And who is Adelmar, Bishop of Puy, and how came he to take such parental care of a poor wounded stranger that he could not possibly have ever known, or seen, or heard of previously?" asked the maiden.

"Thou hast stated, my child," replied the matron, "thy claim upon the time, the heart, the labours, and all the wealth at the command of Adelmar. Thou hadst stronger claims upon him than if thou hadst been the daughter of an emperor, and possessed kingdoms as thy dowry."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the maiden, somewhat puzzled by the words thus addressed to her. "I beseech, you lady, to make me comprehend what were my claims on a man of whom I have never known the name nor title until now."

"You were," said the matron, "wounded, a captive, a stranger, friendless, helpless; and because you were these, and, in addition to these, apparently an unbeliever, that it was the duty of Adelmar to see you cared for, tended, nurtured, provided with everything of which you stand in need, because Adelmar is a Christian bishop, and he is bound not only to preach that which Christianity commands, but himself to practise what he teaches. He met you, whilst you were lying senseless in the arms of a young Irish soldier, who was bearing you to the tent of the Benedictines, where the wounded are attended to.

The Bishop of Puy, who is not unskilled in the healing art, had you therefore laid first on a couch in his own tent, in order that he might the sooner staunch the wounds you had received. In so caring for you, he perceived that your most fitting place for repose and perfect cure was in that portion of the encampment which is peculiarly assigned as the quarter for females, and as those quarters are under the especial care of Gunhilda of England, the wife of Baldwin, Duke of Boulogne, he sent you, my child, to her who now addresses you."

"Noble, generous lady," exclaimed the maiden, again bursting into tears, and again kissing the hand of her hostess, "a mother could not have watched over me with such tender, unceasing love, as you have done; and"—here the maiden paused for a few moments as if lost in deep thought—"and so to act towards a stranger—so to sustain the helpless—so to treat with love one who presents herself before you as an enemy, is—*Christianity*!!! Yea, it must be so, or why does a minister of the Christian creed not only preach, but act on such maxims?"

"Yes, my child," observed Gunhilda, "this is not only Christianity, but these are the very words of the Divine Founder of our faith: 'Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.'"

"If such," said the maiden, "be the precepts and the practice of the Christians, I pray you, lady, to explain to me how it is that Crusaders are in these lands at this moment! How comes it that there are now thousands of men in arms besieging towns, destroying our forces, doing wrong to those who

have never done them wrong, and all this in order that they may take the city of Jerusalem—the Holy City—as they call it, from its rightful owners?”

“My child,” replied Gunhilda, “those who now hold Jerusalem as if it was their own are not its rightful owners—they won it by the sword, they hold it by the sword, and by the sword shall it be taken from them. The Crusaders have laid seige to no city that was not at one time occupied by Christians; and the men who have held those cities, or who now hold them, are persons who either have barbarously exterminated the Christian inhabitants, or, who, with equal barbarity, now hold them in a state of degradation, of bondage—nay, of absolute slavery. Whatever towns have, up to this time, been captured by the Crusaders, and that their victories have been followed by cruelties practised upon the foreigners, the Turks—by whom they were garrisoned—you will find such cruelties have been perpetrated by those who had suffered from the oppression of the Turks, and who had been so brutalised by a merciless domination over them, that they have themselves at last become nought more than Christians in name. Look at Antioch, whose walls are now beset by Christians. Are you not aware that there are Christians at this moment within its walls?”

“I am,” replied the maiden; “and I have heard my father more than once remark that the Christians in Antioch were treated with barbarous inhumanity by his associates in command of the city.”

“And yet,” continued the English matron, “the Christians of Antioch are its ancient inhabitants. To them rightfully it belong, and in their hands

should be the government of that city, where the Christian name was first proclaimed by him who was appointed Christ's vicegerent on earth, and by whose rightful and lawful successors in the chair of St. Peter have been summoned together the warriors of Christendom to come to these lands, and thereby to put an end to the deeds of barbarous inhumanity that are practised upon the Christians who dwell in these lands, as well as upon all Christians, who, animated with a feeling of piety, travel from Europe to Jerusalem to behold the place where He, whom they believe to be their Creator, their God, and their Saviour, suffered death to win heaven for them and for all mankind. As a Christian, I am exhorted to submit patiently to a wrong done to myself; but as a Christian, I am bound to prevent wrong being done to another; and above all things, as a Christian, it is my duty, even at the loss of my own life, to rescue religion from oppression, because, in so doing, I labour to secure to others, to countless generations of others, the means of obtaining their salvation."

"Generous lady," said the maiden, "you have acted with such tender humanity towards me, that I am disposed to place the most implicit faith in everything you say. I have reasons, also, which I shall explain to you hereafter, for asking how it was that he, who is I suppose the living prophet of the Christians—he, whose predecessor was at Antioch——"

"Thou must mean, my child, the Pope, I suppose," interrupted Gunhilda.

"Yes—I suppose so—him whom you called Christ's vicegerent on earth," said the maiden. "I

should wish to know who he is; what large kingdoms are swayed by his sceptre, what mighty armies he can command, what great fleets he owns, what countless heaps of gold he possesses; oh, tell me all about such a potentate, who has been able to induce such numbers of men to quit their homes, and to expose themselves to all the toils of travel, all the perils of the sea, all the afflictions of pestilence, and all the dangers of war, merely to fulfil a wish of his, by which it is plain he never can be a gainer—by which he risks so much that must be precious in his sight, to obtain that which can neither make him a richer, mightier, nor a happier prince. I entreat of you to explain all this to me; for my weak reason can afford no satisfactory solution to such a mystery.

“My child,” replied Gunhilda, “the Pope is no mighty prince of this world—he has no large armies, no great fleets at his command, and no treasures in his possession. The most illustrious of our Popes, in urging on such an expedition as European Christendom is now engaged in, died in exile. The first of our Popes to point the road to Jerusalem was a great scholar—Sylvester the Second; the next who called upon European Christendon to aid the suffering Christians in Syria, was Gregory VII., and the most distinguished of his pupils is the reigning pontiff, Urban II. From this pontiff has emanated the Crusade. It originated at a Council, held in the year 1095, at Auvergne, and at a celebrated city, named Clermont. Over that Council Pope Urban II., with his cardinals and bishops, presided; and it was attended by the bishops of France and Germany, as well as the princes of those

and other towns. When the affairs of the Church had been regulated, there was a great popular assembly held in the open air, for no house or public building could contain the multitude that were assembled. To that assembly the Pope addressed Himself in words which I can now recite to you as exactly as they fell from his lips. Here it is."

With these words the Lady Gunhilda opened a small, richly chased casket, and took from it a parchment roll, on the head of which were painted, in gorgeous letters of purple and gold, the following words:—

"The Allocution of our Holy Father the Pope at Clermont, in Auvergne, as taken down and transcribed by me, Robert, an unworthy Brother of the Benedictine Order of the Monastery of St. Remy.

"People of France, people from beyond the mountains, people—yea, a chosen and elect people—people beloved of God; for such you have approved yourselves by your many good works, and such you are seen to be in the climate you enjoy, and in the fertility of the soil on which you dwell, and such you have demonstrated yourselves to be by the purity of your Catholic Faith, and by your devotion to our Holy Mother the Church;—to you, then—to such a people is our discourse addressed, and for you is our exhortation especially intended; for we wish you to know what is the sad cause that has brought us here in the midst of you; and why it is that which is our grief, and soon to be yours, should also be regarded and felt as the common grief of all the faithful.

“From the boundaries of Jerusalem, and from the city of Constantinople, sad tidings have reached us, not once or twice, but many times and oft, and all to the same purport, namely, that a nation of the kingdom of the Persians, an accursed nation, a nation foreign to the soil, a nation as foreign to the soil as they are alienated from God; a generation whose heart is not moved by the spirit of God, which neither guides itself by His commands, nor places faith in His words; such is the nation, such the perverse generation that has invaded the lands of the Christians; despoiled, wasted with fire and sword, the possessions of the Christians, seized upon the Christians themselves, and making slaves of some, has carried them away from their native land; others it has cruelly murdered; whilst as to the churches devoted to the worship of our Lord, it has first profaned, and then utterly destroyed them, or not outraging, it has retained and desecrated those churches, by appropriating them to the use of its own false religion. The sanctuaries of our churches have been defiled by abominations, Christians have been mutilated, and the blood of the mutilated has been used to sprinkle our altars, or it has been mingled with the holy water in baptismal fonts. Nay, more, this the barbarians have done with some of the Christians upon whom it was their desire to inflict a peculiarly painful and dishonouring death—they have cut a small hole in their stomachs, through that hole taken one end of the entrails, fastened that end to a stake, and then flagellating their victims, have forced them to crawl around the stake, until at last the entrails being entirely extracted, the wretched sufferer has fallen dead upon

the earth before them. Others they have tied neck and neck together, and then with one blow of the sword decapitated two Christians together. But what shall I say as to their nefarious treatment of females? Alas! I must not speak of it; for there are some sins so atrocious, that it is wiser and safer to be silent respecting them, than to dilate upon them.

“As to the imperial kingdom of the Greeks, it is so mutilated, so weakened, so harassed by them, so completely rendered subservient to their base uses, that there is no part of it in which a Christian can travel for two days in safety.

“Upon whom, then, is it incumbent to avenge such wrongs done to Christians, and to rescue the sufferers from afflictions such as these? By whom should such an enterprise be undertaken, and by whom should such a labour be performed, but *by you*—by you upon whom the Lord has been pleased to bestow, beyond all other nations of the earth, a warlike renown, greatness in courage, strength and agility of body, valour to win victories, and the indomitable determination to subdue, to humiliate, nay, utterly to prostrate, all who have the audacity to resist you.

“Arouse you, then, warriors, and be the incitement to your valiant hearts to action, the recollection of the achievements of your ancestors, the virtue and the magnanimity of the knightly Charlemagne, of his pious son Louis, and of your other great sovereigns, who have before now destroyed the principalities of the Turks, and even in the midst of them extended the boundaries of our Holy Church.

But beyond all other things, be your hearts stirred with the thought of our Lord's Holy Sepulchre, which is at present in the hands of foul Gentiles, and of the Holy Places that they now dishonour by their presence, and that with abominable sins they purposely defile.

“‘Oh! ye most valorous knights, the sons of invincible warriors, think upon the glorious deeds of your progenitors, and shrink from demonstrating to the world that you are degenerate and unworthy of them.

“‘Should a tender, longing love for children, wives, or parents seek to detain you from the enterprise now proposed to you, oh! remember that which our Lord Himself has said in the Gospel:—“He who loveth father and mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me. Amen, I say to you; there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethen, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive much more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.”

“‘Let not, then, the thought of earthly property retard you; and let no anxiety as to your domestic concerns be an impediment to you; for is not this the fact, as regards the condition of the country in which you live—that bounded by the sea on one side, and shut up by steep mountains on the other, you are embarrassed by the numbers of your population, and the deficiency of the means to sustain them, so that food is often wanted and cannot be supplied to those who cultivate the earth, and through whose labours it is rendered fertile—and is not the constant result following from such a state of things, that you

annoy and afflict one another, engage in strifes, and not unfrequently come to blows.

“What then, is it that I ask you to do? Let your quarrels cease, be your disputes at an end, your wars against each other be changed to mutual charity, and every cause for dissension removed from amongst you.

“Commence your march for the Holy Sepulchre; take the Holy Land from a nefarious race, and make it subject to yourselves. The Holy Land is the self-same land which was given by God Himself to the children of Israel; and it is as the Scripture tells us, “a land flowing with milk and honey.” Jerusalem is the very navel of the earth, a soil beyond all others frugiferous, and it may be termed another paradise of delights. It is the land which the Redeemer of the human race has illuminated by His coming, adorned by his conversation, consecrated by His passion, redeemed by His death, and distinguished by His burial. There, then, is the royal city placed in the very centre of the earth, now held as a captive, and rendered subservient to those who know not, and will not know the ways of God. It longs, it pines, it sighs, it never ceases to pray that you may come to its aid, and liberate it from the bondage it endures. From you—from you beyond all others, it requires aid; because upon you, beyond all other nations, God has been pleased to bestow the greatest renown for warlike achievements. Hasten, then, on your march to Jerusalem: do so for the remission of your sins, and in order that you may win for yourselves imperishable glory in heaven.’

“And now Pope Urban, in a gracious allocution, having spoken these words, and others to the same effect, he did so deeply move the feelings of those present, that all were affected in the same manner, and all, as in one voice, cried out :—*Deus vult, Deus vult*—GOD WILLS IT, GOD WILLS IT.

“Which words, when they were heard by the ever-venerable Roman pontiff, he raised his eyes to heaven, gave thanks to God, and motioned with his hand to the multitude that he desired silence to be restored, he then continued his address to them in the words following :—

““Dearest brethren, this day has been manifested in you, and by you, that which our Lord says in the Gospel : “Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there shall I be in the midst of them.” Unless the Lord God Himself had inspired you with this thought, the same words would not be simultaneously expressed by you. Although your multitudinous voices have syllabled the same words, yet for the words themselves there is but one origin ; and, therefore, I say to you, that it is God who has inspired into your hearts the words which your lips have pronounced. Be then these self-same words your war-cry in every battle, because they are words that come from God Himself. When, then, you see your enemies drawn up in hostile array against you, be this your signal, and as you advance to the charge, let the self-same words be in the mouth of every warrior ; let there ring from rank to rank, and from man to man, the same vociferous cry :—*God wills it !*

““We neither command nor encourage the old,

the imbecile, or those unable to bear arms, to undertake this enterprise, much less women without their husbands, or brothers, or others their lawful protectors and guardians, because all such persons are more an impediment than an assistance, far more a loss than a gain in such an enterprise. Let those who have wealth help the poor, and equip out of their own means those able to bear arms, and place such under their command. To priests, and those in minor orders, whether they are regular or secular, it is not permitted to take this journey without the permission of their respective bishops; for useless, indeed, would be to them such a journey, if it were an unlicensed undertaking.

“‘As regards laymen, no layman is to proceed on the pilgrimage without the blessing of his priest.

“‘Whosoever, then, shall resolve upon this holy pilgrimage, and having so resolved, shall devote himself to God, as a living, holy and pleasing victim, let him denote that intention by bearing on his front or breast, a figure of our Lord’s cross, and he who is competent to make such a vow, and has commenced its performance, let him place the same sign on his back between the shoulders. And by this double operation men will literally comply with the precept of our Lord, and do that which He himself commanded, when He said :—

“‘*And whosoever doth not carry his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*’

“No mighty earthly monarch,” continued Gunhilda, when she had read the preceding discourse for the youthful invalid, “delivered this oration. These

are the very words as they were uttered by a priest—the bishop of bishops—who presides over the spiritual dominion of the earth, but so destitute of armies, of fleets, and of treasures, that he has not been able to maintain himself in Rome, the capital of the patrimony of St. Peter, against the emissaries of a wicked man and bad prince, Henry IV., Emperor of Germany. He appealed to Christians against the cruelties practised upon Christians in that very city in which Christ himself had lived, and preached, and died. And what was the instantaneous result of this discourse? I shall quote for you the following sentences from the written statement of Robert the monk, who witnessed what he has narrated.

“No sooner had the Pope concluded his discourse than one of the cardinals, by name Gregory, prostrated himself before all who were present, and in the name of all made a general confession, and all, like him, struck their breast with compunction when they declared their past iniquities, and all, with him, prayed for absolution from their sins; and absolution being bestowed upon them, and the Papal benediction imparted to them, then was permission given to each and all to return to their respective homes. And now, in order that it might be made apparent to universal Christendom, that this expedition was not the work of man, but of God, this fact soon came to be notorious (and of its perfect accuracy I am myself, after diligent investigation, a witness), viz., that on the very self-same day on which all those things were said and done at Clermont, in Auverge, the fame of them was like a herald, or a messenger of such a

mighty achievement conveyed to all parts of the earth, shaking men's hearts with the tidings, as if they were an earthquake; at once it was known to all the maritime islands of the ocean that the crusade to Jerusalem had been resolved upon in this Council; tidings they were, in sooth, that imparted a glorious exultation to the Christians, but to the infidel Persians, and dwellers in Arabia, grief and consternation. Such tidings inspired the former with magnanimity, but as regards the latter, filled them with fear and terror. No human agency could, as if with one breath, so fill all parts of the world: the Spirit of God can do that which to man is impracticable.

“Upon the following day Pope Urban convened a Synod of the bishops, in order that, aided by their counsel, he might determine who should preside over the mighty multitude that had now determined on proceeding to the Holy Land. With one assent the Bishop of Puy was elected to that high office, because of his great knowledge, his admirable life and actions, and of his wondrous science in spiritual and temporal affairs.

“Oh! what a vast variety of persons of every age, and of both sexes, determined, in consequence of that Counsel, to abandon home, office, and country, to take up the cross and to proceed on the road to the holy sepulchre.’

“And here,” continued Gunhilda, “let me remark to you, so far from this vast multitude being moved by the command of any earthly king, that those who are the great monarchs of Europe are indifferent or are hostile alike to this sacred enterprise and to our

Holy Father, the Pope, with whom it has originated. The King of England, that foul tyrant and despoiler of the Church, William Rufus, is alone remarkable for his wickedness and his cruelty; the Emperor of Germany is Henry IV., the great enemy to the Popedom, a tyrant himself, and the supporter of schismatical rebels against the Pope; and as regards the King of France, he is at this moment under the ban of excommunication by the Pope, because he has transgressed the laws of the Church, and violated the sacrament of marriage. Such are our potentates of Europe, and they are opposed to the Pontiff and this crusade, whilst they have left the sacred task of taking up the cross to the poor and the humble, the poor in worldly wealth and the humble of heart; and the leaders of this enterprise are gallant soldiers without land, or poor knights who have sold their land to equip themselves, arm their followers, and defray the expenses of the war; or they are wealthy nobles and pious princes, who have abandoned all the pleasures of this life in order that they may expose themselves to sickness, suffering, and even death, in the hope of rescuing their fellow-Christians from persecution, and giving to Jerusalem a Christian liberator. Even from the very couch where thou now reposest, I have but to lose a fold of this tent, and I can point out to thee the quarters of the leaders of our army."

"I pray you, lady, to let me look at them, though it be but for a moment," said the maiden, in a quivering tone of voice, which showed how deeply she was affected by the observations of the Princess Gunhilda.

"There, my child," observed the matron, unfolding

a roll of the tent, and drawing a portion of it back so as to make a species of curtain behind the wounded maiden, who now gazed forth with all the eager curiosity of a child; "there," said Gunhilda, pointing to the outermost group of tents, the most distant from herself, and the nearest to the besieged city of Antioch, "there are the tents and banner of the illustrious Tancred, Prince of Tarentum, and in the same division Roger of Burnavilla, and Adam, the son of Michael, with their followers. Their main duty is to watch and prevent any provisions being conveyed into the beleaguered city. There where thou perceivest the hill begins to slope into the plain, is stationed Bohemond, with his valiant band of warrior. Next to his are the tents of the valiant Baldwin. Directly in front of us are the tents and soldiers of Robert, Duke of Normandy, and Robert of Flanders, and to both in common the task is especially assigned of attacking the walls of Antioch. Behind these, and again more near to us, but with tents and soldiers occupying a far wider extent of ground, so as to prevent the possibility of access to Antioch, are the men under the command of Stephen of Blois, and Hugh the Great, brother of Philip, King of France. Such are the forces that Europe has sent to the Holy Land, and upon the day that this army commenced the siege of the city now before us, it was computed that there were on our side, six hundred thousand men in arms; and beyond these, there were women, and children, and camp-followers, not to be counted by hundreds, but thousands. And now observe——"

"Vengeance is mine! there is the person wounded by Guy of Mascon."

Such were the words at the same moment heard by Gunhilda and the maiden. No sooner did the latter perceive that she was thus indicated than she shrunk back fainting on the couch on which she had until then been half-reclining, whilst she had leant out beyond the side of the tent in order that she might the more distinctly note the different portions of the wide-spread Christian encampment.

"Heaven protect us ! what means this outrage on our privacy ? What man has dared thus stealthily to enter the quarters assigned to the women of the encampment ?"

Thus spoke Gunhilda, as she again looked forth into the camp. She gazed around on all sides visible from where she stood, but there was no appearance of any one, not even of a female moving outside her tent. She let fall the folds of the curtain, so as again to shut out the light and view, and then turning to the maiden said :—

"Knowest thou that coarse, horrid voice, which sounded in our ears as hoarsely as a burial bell ?"

"I never heard its tones before, I am certain," replied the youthful guest.

"I marvel much who it can be," said Gunhilda, as if communing with her own thoughts.

"I do not," observed the girl. "I suppose it is some soldier who had seen me in male attire, whilst I was wearing that garb, witnessed my being wounded, and who has now recognized me in what is my fitting dress, and which I never, but from a sense of filial duty, would have for a moment discarded."

"But a soldier has no right to intrude upon these quarters ; not even Godfrey of Bouillon himself ; no,

he would not venture to come within these tents, without having first asked for, and obtained permission; and yet of him it has been truly said, so good and so exemplary is his piety, that 'he has been remarkable to such a degree for his humility, meekness, sobriety, justice, and chastity, that he has ever seemed to be rather a leader of monks than the commander of soldiers.' When, then, the mightiest of the great in the Christian camp treats us with such reverential respect, how dares any one less than he to violate one of our ordinances! What vulgar soldier would presume to do this? Oh, yes, now I think upon it, there is, there might be one to do so; the young Irish knight, thou hast told me, showed great humanity in his bearing towards thee: could it be *he* that, having recognized thee in thy disguise——"

"Oh!—no—no—no—a hundred times no to that suggestion of yours, lady," said the maiden, her dark pale cheek now reddening with excitement. "The voice of the young Irish soldier was soft and musical, and as full of sweet tones as the song of the nightingale; but that harsh, horrid voice that came but now croaking in our ears was harsh and ominous, and as if reeking with the airs of the grave-yard. Oh! let us think no more of it; there was nothing more meant by the words than the rude exclamation of some uncouth and ill-nurtured warrior, or brutal camp follower. Think of it no more, but talk to me of the wonders of Christianity; talk to me of this, the greatest of wonders, the crusade to the Holy Land. Oh! I do so long to know the truth."

"I will speak to thee as thou wishest, my dear maiden," said Gunhilda, returning with her thin,

cold, pale hand the pressure of the warm clasping fingers which held it. "I will tell thee that which will surprise thee, perchance, more than all else I have yet told thee respecting this crusade. This mighty army thou hast now looked upon; all those flags and streamers denoting the resting places of knights and squires, and men-at-arms; all those variegated-coloured shields, red, and blue, and green, and purple, and those high uplifted standards upon their golden staffs, with the cross everywhere resplendent; all this pomp, and majesty, and magnificence, and glory of war now gathered about Antioch—a wall of steel, and fire, and valour; all this has sprung up in the midst of you, and has come out from us, in consequence of the words of a man so poor, that he has to beg even for a goblet of water; of a man so humble that his parents are not known; of a man so contemptible in appearance, that charity alone would seek him out as an object for its benevolence; and yet it is a man so wretched, so forlorn, that has brought together a Council of the Church, headed by its supreme pontiff, and has conveyed together the whole chivalry of Christendom! This humble, poor man is known by no other name than that of *Peter the Hermit*, and he has been listened to, and he has performed this miracle, because he is a Christian, and appealed to Christians on behalf of Christians."

"And *this* is—is Christianity!" mused the maiden, as she listened to the words of the matron.

"Yes," continued Gunhilda, her weak and fragile frame forgetting its weakness in her enthusiasm, "this is Christianity. To rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of unbelievers, the husband has

parted from his wife, the children from their parents—nay, even lovers betrothed in marriage have postponed the day of their union until Jerusalem be liberated. I speak of that which I do know, my child. Let me tell thee of an incident which I am sure will be pleasing to thee to hear. Three years ago my husband and I were visitors at the court of the Duke of Burgundy; there were great festivities given in honour of the young princess, Florine, who had then attained her sixteenth year, and amongst these festivities was a grand tournament, at which my gentle cousin, Florine, presided as ‘the queen of beauty,’ and truly never was the title borne by one so worthy to wear it, for hers was the loveliness of innocence and girlhood, combined with all that dazzling beauty which makes a woman most resemble an angel. Famed as England is for its fair-haired and snowy necked women, well known as France is for the dark and brilliant eyes of its females, and celebrated as is Spain for the exquisiteness of form and gracefulness of movement in its beauties, yet in Florine, as in the perfection of feminine loveliness, all those attractions are at once combined together. To win her smile, and to claim the reward of valour from her hand, men entered the lists who had cast off their armour for many a year, and to contend with them, as with all others, were young knights who had never before held lance in hand but in the tilting yard. During one entire day the prize was contended for, and at last the conqueror was declared to be a young knight in dark armour, with a black shield without any device, and who, when called upon to announce his name and rank, flung himself on his

knees before Florine, and declared it to be that of *the prince* who had come to the court of Burgundy, to claim her hand as Swein, Prince of Denmark! and thus was the victor in the tournament made known to Florine, and then did she, for the first time, behold the gallant warrior to whom, whilst she was still a child, she had been betrothed! A wooing so commenced had no impediments to encounter but those which the extreme youth of both parties presented, and then it was determined upon that in two years from that time the marriage of two such illustrious personages should be solemnized in presence of the Pope. It was in accordance with that determination that Prince Swein of Denmark, and the Princess Florine of Burgundy were at the Council of Clermont in Auvergne. Both were present when his Holiness spoke the words I have read to you; both were moved by the same divine impulse that actuated the multitude, and both feeling a stronger love of God than of wordly attachment for each other, resolved to take up the cross, and not be united in marriage until (if such was the will of God as regarded them) they should be permitted to aid in, and be present at, the capture of Jerusalem."

"Oh! what good and holy creatures they must be! Are they now in the Christian encampment?" asked the maiden.

"Not yet; but both are now marching hither at the head of a large detachment of Crusaders," replied Gunhilda.

"I could kneel down and kiss the feet of the holy maiden Florine," said Gunhilda's guest, her dark cheek flushing as she spoke. "Shall it ever be my happiness to look upon her?"

“Certainly, dear child,” said Gunhilda, smiling, “you shall, at least, *look upon her*——”

“DEAD,” croaked a hoarse, hollow voice in the ears of both females.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RENEGADE.

IN the largest apartment of one of the highest towers that flanked the walls of Antioch, and from the narrow orifices of which was commanded a view of the Christian encampment, there stood a man, cased in the thick plate armour which, worn then by the Turks alone, was afterwards adopted by the Christians, and preferred by them to the chain or scale armour in which they had previously been invariably arrayed. The thin, grizzled hair of this man showed that he had passed the middle period of life; and the dark wrinkles in his high forehead, and upon his hollow cheeks, and his sad downcast eye, served to prove that anxieties and cares had with him outnumbered his years, and were fast hastening him to his grave. The contraction of his brow, the sudden twitching of his fingers, as they played unconsciously with the belt or hilt of his sword, and the half-muttered exclamations that burst occasionally from his lips, as he paced up and down the room, and then unconsciously stood still, as unconsciously to renew his solitary pace, afforded abundant evidence that within that weakened body there was a heart ill at ease,—a mind dissatisfied with itself,—a conscience that was

not to be hushed, and that would not be quieted into repose.

The man, as he walked up and down the apartment, suddenly stopped !

A new object had attracted his attention.

A flash of light had burst upon the horizon, and for a moment his eyes were dazzled with a novel, unexpected, and unlooked for brightness.

What could it be ?

He looked again—or rather he continued to look with a long, unswerving, steady gaze, on what at first attracted his attention ; and then he perceived that, in the midst of a dark winter's day, the sun had suddenly cloven out for itself a road of light, and its glittering rays were now covering, as if with myriads of sparkling, dazzling diamonds, a polished golden image of the crucified Redeemer, which had been that day erected, for the first time, in front of the light blue tent and snow white cross that denoted the abode and banner of Adelmarr, the Papal Legate and Bishop of Puy.

The man continued to gaze, until the object he so looked upon was lost in the blinding tears that, in despite of his stubborn heart gushed to his eyes, and forced his reluctant memory back to the days of his childhood, when a mother told him what that symbol meant, and wherefore mortals, when they look upon it, should bow their head in reverence, and say—for so she had told him—"Sweet Saviour ! look with pity upon me, a sinner."

The man knew that he was alone—alone—quite alone ; as much alone as if there were nought else in the whole wide world but himself and that glittering

golden image of the Godhead, on which he could now gaze with no eye to watch him.

The man felt that he was alone; and so feeling, he removed the helmet from his head, and knelt down lowly and humbly before that golden image; and, as he did so, the words of childhood came again to his lips, and he said: "Sweet Saviour! look with pity upon me, a sinner;" and, as he spoke aloud the words, he wept like a child.

These strong emotions passed away; and when he again gazed forth upon the plains of Antioch, the sunlight had departed, and the golden image could with difficulty be distinguished amid the banners, ensigns, flags, and crosses, that crowded the distant Christian encampment.

With the sunlight had departed his feelings of devotion, but they had not visited the man in vain, for they had stirred up remorse from its innermost depths; and compelled him to think of what he was, and what he had been.

He rose heavily and with difficulty from his knees, for the agility of youth was no longer in his limbs; and, as he did so, his hand accidentally touched the figure of "the crescent" which formed an ornament on the front of his helmet. A thrill of horror trembled through his frame at the touch.

"*The crescent on my head! and that head has bowed down before the cross! Oh miserable! miserable! A renegade! not true to God nor mammon. A double traitor; forsworn on all sides; neither to be bound by the hopes of my youth, nor the promises of my manhood. A believer in Christ, a feudatory to Mahomet!*"

Again the man paced up and down the apartment, and again he suddenly stopped, to commune with his own thoughts:—" *A renegade!* and *wherefore* a renegade? Of what am I a gainer in this life, for the loss of my immortal soul, which, as it shall look back, after countless ages of misery, upon this brief span of life, will make, in hell itself, the worst of all its damning punishments, the reflection that for anything in so minute, and almost undistinguishable a speck in existence, as the mortal life of man, it should have been lost—so miserably lost—lost, and for ever!—for ever!

"And what have I gained? Let me count those gains, as I am now so near to the close of my career.

"Come, man, look to thyself. Thy soul, thy immortal soul asks thee for an account. Tell it all thou hast gained, and all thou hast enjoyed, and all thou hast won and purchased by parting with its immortal life.

"Mortal—see what thou hast given for immortality.

"What was my first gain? What that for which thou didst take away the soul from its God? Marriage! Thou didst win a wife more true to her faith than thee to thine, for *she* would not marry a Christian, and to win her *thou* didst forswear Christianity for her sake—no, no—not for her's, but for thine own gratification.

"And did marriage—so unholy, so accursed a marriage—bring thee happiness? Are bickerings, reproaches, contempt, and finally a loathing for *the renegade himself*, happiness?

"Oh! the bitter, bitter years of an unhallowed marriage, execrable in the sight of the Church.

"Thou wast not true to thy God ; was thy wife true to thee ? Thou lost thy soul to win her ; and has she abided with thee ? No—thy soul is lost, and she is lost.

"In what, then, art thou a gainer ? Tell to thy soul something as a palliation for its perdition.

"Thou hast had children—that is, thou hast had two more souls to account to God for, along with thine own.

"What is to be thy answer for the souls of thy children ?

"Hast thou placed them in the way of salvation, or permitted them to pursue the path of perdition ?

"When thou standest before the judgment seat, the murderer of thine own soul, what must be thy answer when HE shall ask thee for the souls of thy children HE died on the cross to save ?

"Unhappy children ! offspring of a renegade and of an unbeliever, how have they been nurtured ? how educated ? how taught ?

"Where is thy son ? Thou canst not tell. Even his boyhood was vicious, and when he fled from home it was notorious he believed in nothing—in the Saviour or in Mahomet. The son of the renegade, when he was last heard of, was a notorious reprobate even in the midst of the most audacious reprobates of the court and city of Constantinople.

"Thou hast in him a child, but not a son ; one to claim affinity to thee in blood, but to add by his crimes still greater infamy to the name of—a *renegade*.

"And, then, thou hast a daughter. Is she a joy or comfort to thee ? She hates, for thy sake, the religion thou hast abjured. She blushes to think that

her father was ever a Christian! Fully believing in the creed of her mother, her very piety is blasphemy in thy ears. And where, unhappy girl, is she now? Alas! I know not.

“What, then, my soul, is the gain for which thou hast been lost? No wife, no child, no son, no daughter—all lost! All lost in this life, and then—lost for ever!

“Ah! but then there is wealth. Miserable wealth! Perishable as daylight, it shines to-day, and in an hour is swallowed up in darkness! We hold thee for a moment, and then thou vanishest from our sight like a cloud; we seem to grasp thee firmly, and we often lose thee in the effort to retain thee. Frequently won without labour, thy possession here depends upon the cupidity of the multitude and the caprice of the prince. We only know that we have thee to-day, and cannot tell what reverse of fortune may compel us to-morrow to beg our bread. And is the fugacious possession of such a gift to counter-balance the immortality of a soul?

“But look to the account, my soul—watch narrowly all that selfishness, and vanity, and pride, and sensuality have to plead against *thy* claim to consideration. As a renegade, it is undoubtedly true I hold a high rank and office, and possess an amount of power over my fellow-creatures which I never would have been permitted to obtain had I still remained a Christian. I am honoured with dishonour, exalted with infamy, uplifted for the reprobation of all who prefer their conscientious convictions to any reward this world can bestow upon them. Suspected by those who pretend to confide in me, because I am

a convert, and who suspect me for having become a convert, I am abominated by the poor Christians who are obliged to bow down before me, and who hate me, justly hate me, because I have abandoned the cause of my creed and my country to be ranked as a ruler in the land, and an instrument in the hands of its oppressors.

“And this, my soul, is my gain—or rather these, my soul, are my losses, since wilfully I have lost thee. Wifeless, childless, creedless—without a home—without a country—contemned by those with whom I appear to be, but am not—detested by those I have abandoned, I am—oh! name of shame and horror—a renegade! and the punishment I have purchased with my sins is inflicted by what the world has given as a *reward*! for these sins.

“—— Oh, misery! misery!

“Are my sins as unpardonable, as they are irreparable? Is there no outlet for me by which I may save my soul?

“The arms of the golden image on the cross are still out-stretched. They represent the arms of the Divinity.

“These divine arms embrace the whole world.

“Am I excluded from their embrace—now—and for evermore?

“Man cannot help me! God may!

“Sweet Saviour, look with pity upon me, a sinner?”

And as his heart, rather than his lips, gave utterance to these words, tears, such as he used to shed before passion had blinded his reason and hardened his heart, rushed to his eyes; and again—it was the

second time he had done so that day—he cried like a child.

And so wept the renegade—so sat he with his face buried in both his hands, he knew not how long, for new emotions were throbbing in his heart, when a messenger entered the room, to say that a Greek named Alexander of Constantinople, requested permission to speak with him.

“Admit him,” said the renegade.

So deeply engaged was this man with his own thoughts, that he forgot both the message and the messenger the moment the latter had quitted the apartment. He changed, however, his attitude, for instead of resting his face on both his hands, he leant his elbow on his table, and supporting his head in the open hand, as he gazed upwards, he remained so absorbed in contemplation as not to notice the entrance of the person who asked for an interview with him. And as he thus leant back with pale face, and grizzled hair, and eyes dimmed with tears, which still trickled in his hollow cheeks, he looked the emblem of profound grief in its saddest aspect, for in his case it was grief—combined with old age and fragile health.

The Greek, as he entered the room, removed from his clustering black locks the rich velvet cap which usually covered them, and bowed low and reverentially to the renegade; but as he did so, instantly perceived that neither his entrance nor his greeting had been observed.

The Greek, as he noticed this, paused as he was proceeding to the spot at which the renegade was seated, and looked at him for some time with a

curious, inquiring, searching gaze, as if he felt an interest in the investigation—but if there was an interest felt, there certainly was no sympathy; for the expression of the face continued unmoved: the eye glittered as brilliantly, aye, and as malignantly too, as that of a snake; and on the lip was the same cold, calm, heartless simper, rather than smile, which the man first wore as he entered the room.

The renegade still sat in the same attitude of lassitude and of grief, unconscious of the presence of the stranger. The Greek's curiosity was at length fully satisfied, and he determined to make his presence known; and, therefore, advancing up the apartment, he muttered to himself:—"He is much changed: more than I expected;" and then speaking aloud, he said:

"Do I not stand in presence of the Emir Feroz, commander of the round towers of Antioch?"

"Such is my name—such, too, my title," answered the renegade. "Thy name and business, stranger?"

"My name," said the stranger, "is Alexander of Constantinople—my business is that of my master, the high and mighty Prince, Alexius, Emperor of the Greeks."

"I had a son named Alexander," remarked the renegade in a sad tone; "he should be about thy age. I pray thy pardon stranger; but there is something in the sound of thy voice awakens the thoughts of my son. What was thy father's name?"

"I entreat your Excellency not to press me to tell my father's name," replied the Greek."

"And wherefore?" asked Feroz.

"Because I am not proud of my father," said Alexander.

"Not proud of him! I do not understand thee."

"Then, I must speak more plainly. I do not like to mention my father's name, because—I am ashamed of him."

Feroz felt a thrill as of ice run through his trembling frame as these words of the young Greek were uttered. He, however continued the conversation; for painful as it was, still it was in accordance with the train of thought over which he had been ruminating, previous to the entrance of the stranger.

"Then, dost thou mean to say, young man, that thou dislikest thy father?"

"Dislike him," said the Greek, as if a new idea were presented to his mind, on which he had never before reflected, and which he wished to consider before he replied to the question: "Dislike him!—I cannot say that I ever liked him. Yes—I am pretty sure I never liked him; and therefore, cannot say that affection was ever changed into an opposite feeling, such as aversion. No—I do not dislike him—I merely despise him."

"Despise him! despise thy own father: these are terrible words for a young man to speak."

"Better to speak the truth, however harsh, than falsehood, however agreeable."

"True—true—I forgot," said Feroz, writhing with the mental agony he was enduring. "But, one word more on a subject which must be as painful to you as——"

"Painful to me!" said the Greek—"not in the slightest degree painful to me. I feel honoured that

one enjoying your Eminence's exalted condition should condescend to converse with me on any subject whatsoever; and, therefore, to speak to *you* about myself is so far from being painful, I do assure you it is *very gratifying*."

"Perhaps so—perhaps so," said Feroz: "but to *me* the subject is painful, and, therefore, I shall ask the one question—but one question more—*why* dost thou despise thy father?"

"Because," replied the Greek, and he bowed low to Feroz, as he spoke the words, "he always gave me by his own conduct—a *bad example*."

Feroz fell back on his seat, from which he had risen whilst speaking to the Greek, and, closing his eyes for a moment, he exclaimed in the bitter agony of his heart, "It is just, O Lord!—most just this punishment. The scorpion tongues of wicked children can inflict the most bitter wounds upon the withered hearts of wicked parents."

"And now, having discussed a subject which was painful to your Eminence, you will, I hope, permit me to refer to a matter which will, I am sure, afford you pleasure—because calculated to advance the interests of your sovereign, whilst, at the same time, it inflicts injury upon what must be most odious to you—the *Christian cause*." Such were the words of the Greek, addressed in a tone to the renegade which was intended to represent extreme humility, but was so slightly overacted as to have the semblance of mockery.

Feroz was doubtful what interpretation to put upon words that might be an appeal to his loyalty as a subject, or might be intended as a reproach to him as a renegade.

"The Christian cause! to inflict an injury on the Christian cause? How comes such a proposal from one who professes to be a Christian?"

"Men seldom are," replied the Greek, "that which they profess to be. The professing Turk may be in heart and inclination a Christian. How pale your Eminence looks!—I trust I have said nothing to offend."

"No—no—go on, young man. The words you speak are wise and true, and just—*very just*."

The Greek slowly raised his cap, bowed his head, and continued:—

"Your Eminence is pleased to be complimentary to an ill-spoken and worse-mannered Greek. We are not, I repeat, any one of us what we profess to be. If we were, then earth would be paradise—men angels, and women divinities; hypocrisy would be a vice unseen amongst us: there would be no such sins as pride, or avarice, or ambition: hatreds would be unfelt, resentments unknown, and goodness as superabundant as the air we breathe, or the water we drink. We are none of us—no—not one, from the king to the beggar, that which we profess to be; and, because we are not, you see how the world goes. I am, like the rest of mankind, consistent in my inconsistency, when I, a Christian—that is, a professing Christian—ask of you to do something for another, because it will be injurious to the Christian cause; and I ask *you* to do so because you profess to be a Turk, when, in fact, I ought to suppose that your Eminence is—like myself—*not* that which you profess to be."

"Sir," said Feroz, "you forget the respect due

to my rank, when you institute a comparison between a Turkish Emir and an unknown stranger."

"I entreat forgiveness," said the Greek, "for the liberty. The last thing, I assure your Eminence, I would wish to do, would be to suppose, much less to assert, there was any resemblance between a man like myself, ashamed to acknowledge his own father, and a Turkish dignitary, whose exalted rank is but a reflection of the achievements of his ancestors—the worthy son of worthy sires."

"The offence and the apology are alike forgotten, stranger, in my full forgiveness. Proceed to state what is the object of thy visit," remarked the renegade, who felt the words of the Greek tearing through and rankling in the very fibres of his heart.

"I have proposed that which will be an injury to the Christian cause—that is, to the advance of the Crusaders. I, a Christian, desire that the Christian army may never reach Jerusalem. Thinketh, your Eminence, it is inconsistent in a Christian to entertain such thoughts? Then, let me say, in entertaining that wish, and in endeavouring to enforce it, I do but imitate the example of him to whom alone I owe allegiance—the Greek Emperor, my sovereign master Alexius, professing to befriend the Greeks—for even he professes to be what he is not)—yet does he all, and will continue so to do, that can impede their march, and prevent their attaining the final and complete success they hope for. I am, then, as your Eminence may perceive, a real, true Christian Greek—that is, a Greek Christian—that is, a *professing* Christian, who prefers *Greece* to *Palestine*—and the wishes of him who is my sovereign to the pray-

ers of a foreign bishop, who says he is at *the* head of *my* Church as well as of all other Christian Churches. My religion does not pass outside the boundaries of the kingdom in which I am a natural born subject, and I regard any who transgresses those boundaries, though he calls himself a Christian—be he king, bishop, or pope—my enemy; and, in obedience to the will of my sovereign, the Emperor, will do my utmost to destroy him. Hence it is that I am now in Antioch; hence it is that I have sought to ingratiate myself with its ruler, the high and mighty Baghi Sian, whom the barbarous western Christians, in their barbarous papal dialect, have designated *Accian*, and tremble as they pronounce his new-fangled name; and, hence it is that I am now in presence of the eminent, illustrious, high-born, virtuous, valorous Emir Feroz, to propose to him a plan by which he can increase the favour he now enjoys with his superior, Baghi Sian, the potentate of Antioch, and at the same time inflict injury on the Christians.”

“And what personal interest hast *thou* in any such project?” asked Feroz, his dislike excited, and his suspicions aroused, by the language and bearing of the voluble stranger.

“I have the deepest personal interest in it; first,” said the Greek, “every such success is a claim to a new favour from my most generous and bountiful sovereign, the emperor; second, I strengthen the favour I enjoy with my own sovereign the more I can influence Turkish rulers, like your Eminence, and Baghi Sian, in carrying out plans, injurious to the Crusaders—lessening their numbers, and thereby diminishing their chances of success. Such is *my*

personal interest in this project; it is that of the courtier who desires to impart additional security to the favour he already enjoys with his sovereign."

"I comprehend," said Feroz; "and now, let us hear what is thy project. It must assuredly be some great and glorious feat of arms, which has originated in a mind so magnanimous as yours."

"It is no such thing," said the Greek, for the first time feeling abashed in this interview; but instantly recovering himself. "I feel too anxious for the preservation of so precious an existence as that of the heroic Emir Feroz, to put it, by a proposal of mine, in any imminent peril, even for a single moment."

"The project, then?" said Feroz, impatiently.

"To make it perfectly comprehensible to your Eminence," replied the Greek, "it is necessary to explain that in the Christian encampment before Antioch a new and unheard of arrangement has been made. In order that the purity, piety, and virtue of the Crusaders may be rendered conspicuous to the world, a particular quarter has been assigned to the women and children. To that quarter none but females have access; and my project is unexpectedly to make a sortie from these towers, which are under your command and directly face that portion of the encampment assigned to the women and children; so that what the pious Bishop of Puy has proposed as a plan for rendering the Christian females more secure, may but serve to render it more easy for the Turks to choose, without difficulty, the fairest and the youngest as the fitting prize for their valour."

"And so!" said Feroz, his weak and feeble frame

now roused by indignation to all its pristine strength ; “and so this infamous proposal is audaciously made to me by a stranger whose face I have never seen before ! Begone, wretch, and thank my patience and your own baseness, that I have not stained my sword with thy foul blood. What ! Feroz to make war upon the helplessness of women, and the weakness of infancy ! How darest thou, wretch, unworthy of the name, claim for such a vile purpose as this to come unauthorized——”

“Not so, your Eminence,” replied the Greek, unmoved by the violence of Feroz, “I did not come unauthorized.”

“Then, *by whose authority ?*—speak, man, no more in riddles—I have not time nor patience to parley longer with thee. *By whose authority* I say ?”

“By that of the supreme governor and absolute ruler of Antioch, his Highness Baghi Sian.”

“Baghi Sian !” repeated the renegade, as he thrust back his half-drawn scimitar into its scabbard.

“Yes, of Baghi Sian, continued the Greek ; “and if your Eminence had patience to listen to me, I would ere now have told you that my project has not merely for its object the execution of an exploit which would inflict disaster, cause dismay, entail great dishonour upon the Crusaders, but its successful accomplishment must serve to rescue from captivity a Turkish maiden, whose concealment in the female quarters I have ascertained, and in whose restoration to liberty his Highness Baghi Sian is deeply interested.”

“Indeed !” said Feroz. “I did not know until

now that the calamities of war had reached the household of his Highness. I have heard of no kinswoman of the ruler of Antioch having been made captive."

"She is no kinswoman. The Turks are a placid race. They never make war for the sake of their mothers or their sisters. She is nearer and dearer to Baghi Sian than mother, sister, or wife, although he has never seen her," said the Greek.

"I have asked of thee, stranger, no longer to speak in riddle to me," observed Feroz, impatiently. "How can this woman be more near and dear to Baghi Sian than wife, or mother, or sister?"

"Because," replied the Greek, "he believes in my description of her, and because he knows that I had seized upon her, that she was under my conduct towards Antioch, when it was my misfortune, and, as I conceive, her's also, that the detachment of soldiers under my command should encounter Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum, and a few more knights, that after a brief encounter we were utterly routed, and in the confusion lost all trace of her whom Baghi Sian regards as his destined bride. The main object of the expedition I propose to you is to rescue *her* from the hands of the Christians."

"Then you are quite aware," said Feroz, "that she is not, of her own free will, remaining in the Christian encampment?"

"Nothing can be more certain," replied the Greek. "It is but a brief time since she was wounded by soldiers under the command of Bohemond, in the attempt to escape to Antioch."

"What can be the meaning of so incongruous a

tale? First, a maiden is, as I understand, seized upon by thee—with violence, I presume, and against her will——”

The Greek nodded assent.

“And then,” continued Feroz, “aided by the Christians, she escapes from thee, and then is afterwards wounded by the Christians in the attempt to escape to her first captors.”

The Greek again nodded assent.

“It is a strange story, but——” and here a sudden thought seemed to present itself to the mind of Feroz, for he started, cold perspiration oozed out on his forehead, and his voice trembled, as he asked, hurrying question upon question, of the Greek:—

“How long since the capture was first made by you? Where dwelt the maiden? Of whom was she said to be the daughter? Speak, oh! speak, man, at once; and, if thou canst, tell the truth.”

“Your questions can be easily, and, of a verity, candidly answered,” replied the Greek, absolutely unconscious of the anguish he was about to inflict on the unhappy man who stood before him. “Five months have passed away since I saw and seized upon the loveliest Turkish maiden mine eyes ever beheld,—one who combined the liveliness and vivacity of the Greek with the beauty and delicacy of the most charming Turkish female. She dwelt at the small hamlet of El-Bir, on the road to Araca, and the bower in which she dwelt overhung the bright waters of the River Euphrates, and it was reported of her that she was the daughter of a renegade, a rich merchant at Tyre, who had sent her to

El-Bir, in the hope that she might escape the miseries that were certain to follow from the invasion of the Crusaders."

The latter words were not heard by the hapless man to whom they were addressed. He cast himself down on the chair, and covered his face with his hands, in order that the Greek might not observe his emotion, and muttering to himself—"My child! my child! my child! Amine, my beloved, my innocent Amine! in the hands of this miscreant! wounded! Oh! misery! misery! and again misery! fitting reward for the renegade!"

The Greek could not fail to notice how deeply moved was the worn, weak old man before him; but the cause of such emotion never once suggested itself to his mind. At length he expressed what he really thought, when he remarked:—

"I am afraid your Eminence has been seized with sudden illness."

"Yes, yes, I am ill, very ill," answered Feroz, not knowing what were the words to which he was giving utterance.

"Then I shall take my leave of you," said the Greek; "but before I go, let me know what is it your pleasure I should say on your behalf to Baghi Sian."

"Tell his Highness," said Feroz, aroused from his abasement by the mention of that name, "that my utmost exertions shall be employed to rescue the maiden from her captors, and place her beyond the pursuit of her persecutors."

"And with such an answer I am sure his Highness cannot fail to be fully content, for the valiant

Feroz has always been *true to his word*; his professions are like his Damascus scimitar, *never to be broken*;" and so saying, the Greek, bowing profoundly to the Emir, quitted the apartment.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAGICIAN.

BAGHI SIAN, or, as he was designated by some of the Crusaders, *Accian*, and by other, *Darsian*, was a man who, from his youth upwards had been reared in camps, and practised in the unbridled licentiousness of those who conceive that he who rules an army has a right to dispose as he pleases of the life, liberty, and property of all who dwell within the region over which he, for the moment, exercises supreme and despotic command. At the time that the Crusaders pitched their tents in front of Antioch, Baghi Sian had attained his fiftieth year; and though his bloated face and obese person no longer presented a trace of the beauty which had characterized him in his youth, still Baghi Sian's flatterers did not permit him to observe the change that years had produced in his external appearance, and he himself was unconscious of any internal change, because the passions which he had pampered when he was young, had now become vicious habits, and the desire still to indulge them was mistaken by him for the impulses of a brutalized adolescence. The sensual, blood-thirsty soldier had become a brutal and pitiless general; and

he who had made no friend in his youth was now surrounded by sycophants who coined their praises into gifts, and obtained, in exchange for their unjust eulogies, golden presents extorted from the oppressed Christians of Antioch.

Baghi Sian possessed but one quality that was not a vice, and that was dauntless bravery; a bravery so conspicuous in the battle-field as to animate the timid, encourage the wavering, and inspire the timorous to follow his standard into the thickest squadrons of the foe. He had in all his army but one man like to him in ferocious animal courage, and at the same time more savage in his demeanour, and more cruel in his acts. This was his lieutenant, the malevolent Ibrahim, a man who was a giant in height, and whose awful lance, and still more awful mace, armed with iron spikes, were objects of dread to the whole Crusaders' army. These two men were what was called "friends," that is, they practised the same vices, had no sympathy for their fellow-creatures, were inseparable in companionship, countenanced each other in vice, and laughed alike at the very name of virtue, as a mockery, as a mask for sin, as a mere pretence with the weak, under the guise of which they practised atrocities which they pretended to denounce. Both professed the most cordial, mutual regard, but in their hearts they despised each other. Ibrahim detested Baghi Sian for what he regarded his "selfishness," and Baghi Sian loathed Ibrahim for what he believed to be his "ingratitude towards himself."

Such were the two associates now seated together

in the rich and luxuriously furnished apartment of the governor of Antioch.

"I do not believe," said Ibrahim, "one word that this cunning, thieving Greek has been saying to you about the wondrous beauty of El-Bir."

"Perchance you do not believe that there ever was any such person in existence," said Baghi Sian, laughing, but still irritated by the suspicion of his friend.

"Well, as you do put the question to me, I confess to you I do not believe there ever was such an individual in existence," replied Ibrahim. "How do *you*, illustrious Baghi Sian, know there *was* or *is* any such person? Have you ever seen her?"

"No," replied Baghi Sian.

"Have you ever seen as much as the toe of her slipper, or a gem from her necklace, or a bead from her armlet?"

"No, none of these things, I admit, have I ever seen."

"Then how know you that there is such a being in existence?"

"How do I know it? the Greek told me so."

"Very well," replied Ibrahim, seeing the advantage he had gained, and not displeased to have an opportunity of tormenting *his friend*. "How many purses of gold has the Greek received since he first told you this story?"

"Fifty purses at the least. I kept no count of them; but I am sure that I gave fifty. Recollect, however, great expenses had to be incurred in seeking her."

"Ah! ah!" said Ibrahim, with a jibing laugh,

"this is a very improving, profitable story to the Greek. First he tells you of an unknown maiden—a few purses of gold for such good news as that. He invents a story, and is paid for the invention; then he fixes upon a far distant place where this fair maiden is to be sought,—a long journey, a very expensive journey too, I warrant. It is a good invention, and requires good payment, and of course more gold purses are given for the new invention. Well, the inventor remains away a sufficient time to have expended, on his own pleasures, the gold he has won from his dupe. Then comes a finer and bolder invention. He has seen the maiden, he has seized her, she was under the safeguard of the inventor, when whoop! she is carried off no one knows whither, and no one shall ever be able to discover where, and all this by an enchanter—a *new invention*—who is called Bohemond, the Crusader, and——"

"Alexander of Constantinople craves the favour of an audience with your Highness," said a slave to Baghi Sian.

"Admit him instantly," replied Baghi Sian. "You are free to examine himself, Ibrahim. If you can discover him to have played false with me, I shall have him decapitated in five minutes after he leaves this room."

The Greek entered the apartment with the bold and confident air which was usual with him; but a slight shudder, in despite of himself, passed through his limbs, when he observed a secret signal given by Baghi Sian to the slave who had acted as his conductor. He knew enough of Baghi Sian's manners and customs to be aware that the signal he had given was for the attendance of an executioner.

"Alexander of Constantinople," said Baghi Sian, "thou knowest, or thou shouldst have known ere now, that I am not a man that any artful, juggling Greek can cajole with impunity. Thou hast received much money from me on account of a Turkish maiden who should be (if thou hadst been faithful to thy promise) an inmate of my harem long ere this. Thou hast made many fair excuses why that promise has not been fulfilled, and I have placed faith in them. It is not so with my friend Ibrahim; he doubts thy story, he wishes to question thee upon it; answer him candidly if thou lovest thy own life. Thou knowest I reign supreme in Antioch, and emperor or soldan could not save thee if I but say the words—'Thou shalt not be a living man five minutes more.'"

"I am aware that life and death are alike in the hands of a just man and a generous prince, when they are placed in yours," replied the Greek. "I have told your Highness nought but the truth, and truth, like the reed upon the river bank, however it may be bowed down for a time by the storm that seeks to overwhelm it, will still remain unbroken, and still rise again fresh and vigorous as ever, unchanged when the tempest has passed away, as blooming and as beautiful as if the hurricane had never essayed to uproot it."

"I told your Highness the Greek was gifted with the fancy of a poet," observed Ibrahim. "He has invention for *you*, and *figurative language* for *me*. Come, Greek, give us a description of this Turkish maiden of whom you have been speaking to his Highness."

"Willingly," replied the Greek. "Her age is

about seventeen; her hair is dark as the raven's wings; her skin softer than the peach's down; in her eye are the blackness of ebony and the brilliant flashing of the diamond; her mouth is a rose bud; her teeth pearl; her form as agile as that of the antelope; her voice is sweet as the song of the nightingale; and the perfume of her breath is as ravishing to the senses as the odour of richly spiced wine. Such is the maid of El-Bir."

"Why this is a description of a festive banquet, and not of a woman," said Ibrahim sarcastically to the Greek—"with the exception of the raven's-wing, the ebony, and the diamond, your maiden is a composition of fruits and flowers—very poetical, I admit, but not at all life-like. How should I ever find out the original—how recognize her, by your similes of rose buds, and nightingales, and spiced wine? I never yet saw a beautiful girl that was like any one of these things. But you say she is living—actually living—if she is, then she can be seen by some one besides yourself. Tell us where she is to be found *now*; and, at the same time, mention the name of any one, except the veracious Alexander the Greek, who has seen her as you describe her to be."

"I can answer both questions, and at the same time I can promise that within twelve hours she shall be in the very apartment in which we are now conversing," replied the Greek.

"Do what you are asked—do not promise more than you can perform," drily remarked Ibrahim; "remember you have made many promises, which you have not yet performed."

"Slave!" said Baghi Sian, his rage excited by the

last remark of his associate Ibrahim—"do first what thou hast been asked. Answer with candour the questions put to thee by Ibrahim. Where is now the maiden? who besides thyself has seen her?"

The cheek of the Greek crimsoned as he heard himself addressed in such ignominious terms. That, however, was neither the place nor the time to manifest his resentment. He vowed, however, that the insult should be avenged, as he bit his lip, and then with a voice not wholly free from emotion, he said:—

"The commands of your Highness shall be obeyed. The maiden is now in the Christian encampment; and I have spoken not an hour since to a person who saw her there."

"And was this person," said Ibrahim, with a sneer, "a man or woman?"

"A man."

"And can that man himself be seen or spoken with?"

"Both."

"Where?"

"Here in Antioch."

"Indeed!" said Ibrahim, somewhat puzzled by the confident manner of the Greek. "How long will it take to produce so valuable a witness?"

"Not longer than my descent to the citadel gate, and my return hither. Is it the pleasure of your Highness that I should conduct him to your presence?"

Baghi Sian nodded assent.

"Then I hasten to obey your wishes," said the Greek, as he passed rapidly out of the apartment.

"Stop—stop—*honest* Greek," said Ibrahim. "I

would take the liberty of suggesting that some of the guards who now stand at the door should accompany you, and let them be watchful that no words pass between you and *your* witness."

Baghi Sian gave commands such as they had been suggested by Ibrahim, and the Greek left the room, as carefully guarded as if he was about being led forth to execution.

"I suspect," said Ibrahim, when he and the Governor of Antioch were alone, "that some new trick is on the point of being played upon you: that a fresh attempt to get more purses of gold is about to be made: that some miserable story has been concocted between the Greek and a contemptible accomplice: that what the one will affirm the other will asseverate: that the story of the maiden being in the Christian encampment, and being seen there by this witness of the Greek, is nothing more or less than—a *new invention*—the fiction of a schemer, backed by some unknown and obscure liar."

"Then woe to both! if it should be so," observed Baghi Sian, "for as sure as they are living, both shall, if they are seeking to deceive me, be impaled upon the battlements of Antioch."

The Greek, guarded as a prisoner, was conducted back to the presence of Baghi Sian; and in a few moments he was followed by an old man similarly guarded. The old man had resumed the robes of a monk of Mount Athos, and he carried with him his pilgrim's staff.

Baghi Sian nodded to the guards to quit the room, and when they had done so, he turned to Ibrahim and said:—

"You doubt the truth of all the Greek has been saying; question his witness in such a manner as you think best calculated to elicit the truth, or ascertain the fact."

"Old man," said Ibrahim, "thou hast doubtless heard from Alexander of Constantinople the story of the Turkish maiden of El-bir?"

"I have," replied the old man, in a harsh, fierce tone, which sounded in the ears of the haughty Ibrahim as if the speaker scorned him.

"And thou givest credence to that story?"

"I do."

"And wherefore?"

"Because these eyes have looked upon the maiden."

"Indeed!—let our eyes then look upon the eyes that have looked upon the maiden; perchance the raven locks, diamond orbs, and rose-bud mouth are mirrored in them," said Ibrahim, in a jibing tone.

The old man advanced from the place where hitherto he had been standing, at the lower end of the apartment, and walked up to the divan on which Ibrahim was reposing in a half-recumbent posture, and when he stood within a yard's distance of the person who had so jibed him, he suddenly cast back the hood which had concealed his hideous features, and fixing his glaring eyes upon those of his interrogator, he appeared at once to fascinate him by his glance; for Ibrahim seemed compelled, even in his own despite, still to look at him, until at last sight itself became painful, and a film appeared to cover with a thick obscurity his eye-balls.

A laugh—it was not that of a human being, but of a demon—burst from the thin, boldless lips of the

wicked old man, as he perceived that he had found in the ferocious Ibrahim a fitting subject wherewith he might exercise some of the diabolical arts of magic of which he was a master.

He again stood face to face with Ibrahim—again fastened his glaring eyes upon his victim, and, as he did so, moved his talon-like fingers and thin bony hands in the air rapidly, from the ceiling towards the floor, as if he were tearing some object not visible to the human eye.

All this did not occupy a minute of time. The magician then turned to Baghi Sian and said:—
“Wouldst wish to be convinced of the truth of the story of the Greek?”

“I would,” replied the Governor of Antioch.

“Wouldst wish Ibrahim not only to admit, but to prove its truth?” again asked the magician.

“Certainly,” replied Baghi Sian; “but how is this to be done, unless it be done by magic?”

“But it shall be done by magic,” said the old man.

“Ah!” said Baghi Sian, “I do not believe in magic.”

“Nor I,” said Ibrahim, with some difficulty.

“Nor I,” glibly remarked the Greek.

“Dost thou believe that the Son of God descended upon earth to purchase by his blood salvation for mankind?” asked the old man.

“I believe in nothing but what is in the Koran,” said Baghi Sian.

“I believe in nothing out of the Koran, and very little of what is in it,” stammered Ibrahim.

“And I,” said the Greek, “believe with my

renegade father, that what is in the Koran is nonsense, and I think as my Turkish mother thought of Christianity."

"It is well," said the wicked old man; "then no Sacrament of the Church can here mar the potency of my charms. Upon none of you have the waters of baptism ever flowed, and to none of you has a priest's blessing ever extended. Original sin encases the soul of each of you with an impenetrable armour, and you have added to its strength by your lives of daily sin. Such are the instruments where-with magic can alone work effectively. Ye who believe in nothing shall believe in magic." Speaking these words, his hands passed from the shoulder to the fingers of Ibrahim's right hand, and then turning to Baghi Sian, he said, "Bid thy brave lieutenant draw his dagger and stab me to the heart—I defy him."

"Ibrahim, said Baghi Sian, "do as this old braggart wishes. Stab him for attempting to deceive us with his vain prattle about magic."

The command thus given fell upon no unwilling ear. Ibrahim was amazed at the audacity of the old man, and gladly availed himself of the opportunity of thus avenging the insult. He started from the divan, for the purpose of rushing forward, but his right hand and arm were not alone paralyzed, but he felt as if they were glued to his side, and feeling this, he flung himself back on the couch, and exclaimed: "Curses on him! my hand is powerless, and my arm moveless."

Baghi Sian looked with amazement upon what he witnessed: "Can this," he asked, "be really true—or

can it be that Ibrahim has joined with you to play some clumsy trick upon me?"

"Be your Highness the judge of what yourself shall witness. Ibrahim has denied the truth of what the Greek has said. He shall now testify as to its accuracy."

Again the old man stood before Ibrahim: again fascinated the ferocious soldier by his gaze: again the skelton-like arms and claw-like hands of the old magician waved in the air, as if he were entwining with invisible cords of the body of Ibrahim: and as the necromantic arts were employed, the soldier fell back on the couch, and at length lay in a seemingly profound sleep.

"Ha! ha!" said the old man, pointing with scorn at the prostrate, helpless, motionless, statue-like figure before him. "There now lies the scorner, the doubter, the jiber—there lies he who would believe no man's word: let us now try how much we are to believe of what he says of himself, and what of others."

The old man muttered to himself some words in a language that was unintelligible to his hearers, and then striking with his long staff, and all his strength, the prostrate Ibrahim, he said, in tones so hoarse, so hollow, and so awful, that an icy terror ran through the bones of the mighty Baghi Sian and the supple Greek:—

"Evil spirit of the unbaptized Ibrahim, art thou obedient unto me?"

"I am as thy slave," were the words uttered by the lips of the motionless Ibrahim.

Again the old man struck with all his might the prostrate body of the Turk, and said:—

"Slave, sit up, and let thy open, glaring eyes, and the indignities I offer thee, prove to the illustrious Baghi Sian that the sinful body to which thou art attached is bound in the chains of sleep, stronger than if there were iron fetters on thy limbs."

As the magician spoke the words, the body of Ibrahim arose, as stiff in its motions as if it had been transformed to stone; and at the same moment the eyes opened, and seemed, in their fixed, senseless stare, like the sightless eyes in the head of a dead man.

Baghi Sian looked at first with astonishment, and then with dread at the scene before him. For the first time in his life a sensation of fear crept into his heart, as he saw the old man grasp the beard of Ibrahim, tear with rage some hair from it, fling them scornfully in his face, and then, with all his strength, strike with his open hand the proud, ferocious soldier on the cheek.

The face of Ibrahim remained unmoved: he seemed to feel no pain, and there was no manifestation of emotion at the insults thus gratuitously offered to him.

"Evil spirit of a wicked man, prepare to obey me," said the magician.

"I am thy slave," replied Ibrahim.

"Evil spirit of a sinful man, away from thy sinful body, seek for, and tell me when thou hast found her, the maiden that Alexander discovered in El-Bir, and that he was conducting to Antioch when interrupted by the Crusaders."

Ibrahim remained silent.

"Hast found her?" asked the magician.

"Not yet—not yet—but I am on her track," replied Ibrahim.

"Evil spirit, bestir thyself," said the magician, and again he struck his victim a heavy blow with his pilgrim's staff.

"Ha! I have found her."

"Where?"

"In the Christian encampment."

"In what part of it?"

"In the quarter assigned to the females."

"In what place is she?"

"In a large tent—and there is by her side a female clothed in rich attire."

"And what is the maiden doing at this moment?"

"She is now asleep. Ha! the lady did but come to look upon her, and has now left her alone."

"And what does the lady?"

"She is kneeling before ——" and at the word the body of Ibrahim trembled as if with strong convulsions.

"Speak—slave—evil spirit—say what is the lady kneeling in presence of?" said the magician.

"Ah!" replied the trembling Ibrahim, "I have tried to see, and each time I have made the effort I have been plunged into fire. I dare not, cannot look upon the object before which she is praying."

"Slave—coward—caitiff—evil spirit of a sinful man—I know it well—it is your condemnation and mine; it is a picture of the crucifixion."

"Name it not—name it not," said Ibrahim; "to name it is to fill me with scorching flames. Have pity on thy slave."

"Go—slave—evil spirit of a sinful man, obey m

bidding. Seek out for me the great knight, Bohemond of Tarentum by whose valour the maiden was saved from the hands of the Greek."

"I have found him."

"Where?"

"In a large, rich tent—and with him there are others: they are seated at a council table: there is grief in the countenances of all: there are priests with them."

"Is the Bishop of Puy there?"

"No."

"Seek for him."

"I have found where he is."

"What is he doing?"

"I cannot tell?"

"And wherefore, evil spirit of a sinful man, canst thou not tell what the Bishop of Puy is doing?"

"Because, in the apartment in which he is there is SOMETHING so awful that I dare no more approach IT than I could enter Heaven."

"Oh!" said the magician—"and I know well both WHO and what IT is. I am not worthy to name IT—and even now but alluding to IT is weakening my power over thee. Back, back—to the tent of the knights—to the tent of Godfrey of Bouillon."

"Tell me—what he is doing?"

Ibrahim gave a shriek of agony—and then, in a weak and trembling voice, he said:—Oh! in pity take thy slave from the presence of Godfrey—for as he grasps his two-handed sword, I feel the pain of death *here*."

"Where, slave?" asked the magician.

"*Here*," answered Ibrahim, drawing his hand

right across the middle of his body. "Oh! in pity, bid me go from the presence of Godfrey."

"Away, slave, coward," said the magician. "But what can this signify? Why is there this terror of Godfrey, unless it be that Godfrey be doomed to send this evil spirit to its last eternal doom? Back again—now look well and narrowly at the maiden, and say whether or not Alexander has truly depicted her."

"Yes; he has told the truth—the maiden is as lovely as painter ever portrayed, or youthful poet ever fancied."

"Now seek, evil spirit of a sinful man, and see if you can discover any one who watches as anxiously over the sleeping maiden as the richly attired lady thou hast already described."

"Thy slave has discovered," answered Ibrahim, "outside of the females' quarter one whose eyes are ever fixed on the tent in which reposes the maiden of El-Bir."

"Describe him," commanded the magician.

"He is tall and thin, and fair and young, and handsome. He bears in his hand a battle-axe: there is a green cross surmounting a wreath of trefoil, which encircles his helmet: he never, even for an instant, ceases to look towards the maiden's tent."

"From this time forth," cried Baghi Sian, "I shall never enter the battle field against the Christians that I will not eagerly seek out with my sword for that young soldier with the green cross and the wreath of trefoil on his helmet. Oh! for a single combat with him."

"Seek for it, and you shall obtain it," replied the

magician. "He belongs to a nation that delights in deadly combat with unbelievers; whether it be in the field, to slay them with the battle-axe, or in the cloister, to encounter them with crozier and book learning. Fear, however, for the result of a combat with that young soldier, unless I first array thee with a charm so potent as to render thee invincible. Give me ten purses of gold, and I will impress upon thy head, thy waist, and thy foot, an image of the Pagan Diana, which will make thee as assuredly unconquerable in single combat, as it ever did the Greek *Athleta* in the Olympian games."

"I scorn to accept any aid but that which my armour can give me: I refuse to bring against my foe any weapons more deadly than my sword and lance," said Baghi Sian. "But proceed—proceed with thy magic arts; although I fairly own to thee, I still suspect that thou and the Greek, and even Ibrahim, are seeking to delude me. Wherefore I cannot divine."

"Oh! oh!" said the magician. "Swear by the Koran that thou wilt not harm me, nor the Greek, nor Ibrahim, for what may be said displeasing to thee, and I shall soon convince thee that Ibrahim is only saying that which he knows or believes to be the truth."

"I swear," said Baghi Sian.

"And now for a more potent charm than any I have yet used" continued magician—"now to force the spirit of lies to tell the truth."

The old man having given utterance to these words removed the top from his pilgrim's staff, and took from it a small box containing what appeared to be

some dark dust, which he let fall in small quantities upon the floor, until at last a circle was drawn around himself and Ibrahim. He then removed the iron spike at the end of his staff, rubbed it strongly against the floor, and from the end of the pilgrim's staff there burst forth a blue and crackling flame, with which he touched the circle of dark dust, and a fire burst forth all around him and his victim, which was extinguished as instantaneously as it had kindled in a flame, filling the apartment with a thick and stifling smoke.

When the smoke had cleared away, the old man's thin, claw-like fingers were on the bare head of Ibrahim; and standing in that attitude, with Ibrahim still erect, and his sightless eyes, unmoved, staring straight before him, the following dialogue passed between the two—the magician and his victim:—

“Evil spirit of a wicked man, art thou, whilst this charm is working upon thee, my slave?”

“I am thy slave.”

“Canst do, whilst this charm works, that which is most difficult for an evil spirit?”

“I can.”

“What is the most difficult—what the most painful—what the most abhorrent to thy nature?”

“To tell the truth.”

“And thou, now, canst tell the truth?”

“I can.”

“Then tell me truly, dost know his Highness Baghi Sian?”

“I do.”

“Dost thou not call thyself his friend?”

"I do."

"Art thou really his friend?"

"No."

"And wherefore?"

"Because I consider him to be base, low, mean, treacherous, and selfish."

Baghi Sian's hand clutched the hilt of his dagger as these words reached his ears.

"Thy oath," said the magician, pointing with his long, bony finger at him, and with the word and attitude the Governor of Antioch was conscious that the wicked old man had obtained a species of mastery over him also. His spirit, therefore, was quelled whilst he listened to the remaining portion of the conversation between the magician and Ibrahim.

"And yet thou callest thyself his friend?"

"I do."

"And wherefore?"

"Because I am not strong enough to declare myself what I really am—his enemy—and because, whilst calling myself his friend, I can make his very vices subservient to my own profit."

"Which do you most despise or hate him?"

"I cannot tell: I despise him, because of his want of intellect; and I hate him, because of his power."

"And if thou hadst the opportunity wouldst injure him in any way?"

"I would injure him in every way, and to the utmost extent of my capability."

"Wherefore didst thou doubt, or pretend to doubt, the story of the maid of El-Bir?"

"For two reasons: first, I doubted its truth, because it was told by a Greek; next, if my doubt had proved

vain, I would still have availed myself of the stupidity and baseness of Baghi Sian, to induce him to disbelieve it, and then I would have sought and carried off the maiden for myself."

The furious rage of Baghi Sian, upon hearing this reply, could be no longer restrained. He bounded at once from his seat, and forgetting the helpless, motionless position in which Ibrahim was sitting, he struck with his clenched hand the victim of the magician in the face; blood followed the heavy blow, and the body rolled backward on the floor, as if it had been that of a statue which had been overthrown by some act of violence.

"I fear your Highness has slain your gallant lieutenant," remarked the Greek.

"I care not," said Baghi Sian, "his own words prove him to be a base and treacherous villain. He has admitted he wished to do you wrong, in order that he might despoil me of what I wished for more than countless treasures. Come, Greek, come and tell me what says Feroz to your plan for attacking the female quarter of the Christian encampment. Come to my treasure-chamber, in order that I may reward thee, according to thy deserts, and recompense thee for my suspicions. Old man," said the Governor of Antioch to the magician, who was now stooping down over the prostrate, bleeding body of Ibrahim, "here is gold for thee. Exercise thy skill in restoring animation to the carcase of that dog; but beware he does not know thou hast been practising thy arts upon him, or he will repay thee for the life thou hast given back to him by taking thine own."

The Greek stooped down, and whispered in the ear

of the old man, and said: "I know not by what trick thou hast played this part; but it has been done admirably well. You are the most accomplished of all old rogues."

"Trick—playing a part—rogue! Then, despite of what thou hast seen, thou dost not, Alexander, believe in magic," said the old man, with a malignant smile upon his lips.

"I believe in nothing," replied the Greek.

"Be it so," answered the magician; "then watch thyself well; for be assured I have but to catch thee asleep, and I shall have from thy own lips the reason why that mysterious pressure of the hand passed between thee and the assassin in the dark passage of the cavern, when we last met together."

A deadly paleness covered the cheek of the Greek when he heard these words. He did not, however, venture to reply to them, but hurried out of the apartment after Baghi Sian.

"It was a wise counsel," muttered the old man to himself, as he staunched the blood which was oozing out of the contused features of Ibrahim; "it was a very salutary counsel, that which Baghi Sian gave, when he told me not to permit this ruffian to behold me on recovering his senses. I shall wipe out, as far as I can, all traces of the injuries he has received, and then leave him."

The old man removed all stains of the blood that had flowed from the injuries inflicted on Ibrahim. He replaced the sleeping figure on the sofa; and then waved his hands upwards from the floor to the ceiling, as if undoing the charms he had practised. He examined with a careful eye the apartment; his eyes

gloated with delight on its rich golden vessels, but his hand did not touch them. He then stole with noiseless steps to the door, and in a few minutes afterwards was outside the city walls of Antioch.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.

It was the dead hour of the night. Not a sound was to be heard but the heavy, regular iron-heeled tread of the distant sentinel, from time to time broken by the clattering noise of the war-horse, and the jingling ring of armour on the steel-clad rider, as the posts of the Christian army were visited by those whose duty it was to watch over the safety of their sleeping comrades.

It was the dead hour of the night, and all in and about the tent of the Lady Gunhilda had retired to rest, with the exception of the lady herself and of her youthful guest. Both were seated on a couch, their arms clasped around each other; and before them was a table with light, and by its side, resting on an ebony stand, an open psalter, richly illuminated with paintings representing the saints of God and passages in Holy Scripture, so that every page of the magnificent manuscript was in itself alone a theme for pious meditation. Hour had passed after hour, unheeded by both, in studying this book, in questions asked by the younger female, and ex-

plained by the elder. They had not tired in their task; but a chance observation made by the princess induced the intelligent and thoughtful pupil to pause in her interrogatories, to reflect for a few moments, and to say:—

“ ‘Worldly misfortunes, personal defects, should not be the subject of sorrow with us. We should accept them as blessings from heaven, if they but serve to make us think on the state of our immortal souls, and help us to find the only path by which we may secure our salvation.’ These were your words, gracious lady. Oh! my generous benefactress, how applicable are they to *me*! The wound which has marred that beauty of which I was once so vain, has been to me a most beneficent deformity; for it has led me to this place and to you; and you have given to me what my own mother could never have bestowed upon me—what my unhappy father deprived me of—a knowledge of God, of my own weakness, of my own unworthiness to be called His child. Oh! you have indeed been more than a mother—better than a father—to me, for you have acted like a true Christian.”

“Amine—my good and gentle Amine,” said Gunhilda, “remember that the time is fast approaching when I can in very truth call thee my child; for I am to be more than thy mother I am to be thy God-mother, and thou art thenceforth to be my God-child—by beloved ‘MARY,’—Amine.”

Amine kissed the pale, wan cheek of the good lady who thus addressed her, and said:—“Oh! how I do long for that happy day, when the good Bishop of Puy shall declare I am sufficiently instructed in

all the truths of the Christian religion to receive upon my sinful head the saving waters of baptism. Oh! that my poor father were but present to witness it."

"*Thy father!*" said Gunhilda; "why not rather wish for the presence of thy mother? She has never known the truth, and like thyself might obtain the grace to receive it; but thy father has known the truth, and wilfully abandoned it. For the one there is a chance of salvation, but who can entertain a hope as regards the other?"

"I do—oh! I do, lady," replied Amine. "My mother never mentioned the name of the Saviour, but to blaspheme it. Her most bitter reproach to my father ever was that he *had been* a Christian—her taunt ever was that he was *still* a Christian in his heart. On the other hand, my father ever spoke with kindness of the Christians. The power that he wielded was never employed for their oppression—constantly for their protection. It was in consequence of his discourses with me about the Christians, that, when the opportunity was afforded to me, I asked you to tell me of Christianity; and, permit me to add, your conduct to myself was in perfect accordance with what my father ever said respecting the charity of Christians."

"And yet your father abjured Christianity," observed Gunhilda.

"Alas! he did so. Oh! pray, lady, that God in his mercy may pardon him; for I am not yet worthy to pray for him. The unbaptized Mahommedan cannot presume to pray for him who, though baptized, became a Mohommedan."

"But what of thy mother? If her influence induced thy father to forsake his religion, would not the same evil influence be still exercised over him?"

"No," replied Amine; "my mother has long since abandoned the house of my father. Her place of concealment has remained for years a mystery to us. None can tell whether she be living or dead. I had, too, a brother, but I do not remember-him. I cannot recollect having ever seen him."

Gunhilda was about to speak, when suddenly a whizzing noise seemed to fill the air; and, ere she and her companion could perceive it had ceased, two or three arrows came dropping through the tent, and one fell on the table before them; and as the arrow-head buried itself deep in the wood, the table trembled with the shock, and the light flickered in the lamp before them. A shout arose, and then a cry of agony; and then was heard again the shrill whizzing in the air, and the noise of rending the cloth of the tent, as the arrows tore a way for themselves over their heads. Another shout was followed by confused cries and agonizing shrieks; and then again the whizzing sound, and a lower flight of arrows, which seemed to fill the tent, to cling to its folds, and to drop heavily to the ground. Both females involuntarily stooped their heads, and both—in the midst of awful shouts, and cries, and groans, and the wailing of women, and the shrill shrieks of frightened children—fell upon their knees, and prayed for the mercy and protection of heaven.

Both were thus kneeling, when a soldier rushed into the tent. His only arms were a shield and a battle-axe, and on his head, Amine remarked, was a

helmet without a visor. The helmet bore on its front a green cross, and around its rim was a wreath of emerald stones, in the form of shamrocks. Amine at once recognized him as the soldier who had borne her, on the day she had been wounded, from the river bank to the encampment.

"Fly ladies—fly at once from this place to the tent of Bohemond. I have been on the watch outside the camp. I have observed the foe advancing from the walls of Antioch, and I have perceived that the main body are making the attack upon this quarter, with what object I know not; but I suppose it is to capture and carry away with them the noblest ladies in the encampment. Most probably, then, the attack is specially intended against *you*, Lady Gunhilda. Fly then—fly at once. I shall be your conductor to the tent of Bohemond. Sheltered by the knights under his command, no harm can reach you."

"Noble, generous youth, I know thee," said Gunhilda; "I know thee; thou art Philip of Brefney, and willingly do I place myself, and her who is dearer to me than myself, under thy protection. Lead us where thou wishest, we know thou will guide us prudently and safely."

"Proceed, then slowly before me, out of the back of the tent," said Philip; "the arrows of the foe are all directed to the front, and none can reach you but through my hauberk and body, whilst I hold my shield over the heads of both, to protect you from falling lance or javelin."

"Brave and generous youth," said Gunhilda, clasping her arms around the waist of Amine, so as

to draw her closely to herself, "I know not how to thank thee, nor how I can re-pay thee."

"Pray for him," whispered Amine; "pray that the Blessed Virgin may intercede for him who thus is ready to sacrifice his own life to save matron and maid from the foul hands of brutal and wicked men."

The two females, thus shielded from the chances of receiving a wound, passed from the tent of Gunhilda, and thence through the lines of tents which were ranged behind those of the chief female personages, and at last they reached an elevated space of ground, a short distance from the quarter of the camp they had abandoned.

"For an instant, stop," said Philip, "until I look round, and see which is the safest path for us now to pursue to secure our retreat to the quarters of Prince Bohemond."

The request of Philip was complied with. They paused in their flight to look behind them.

They saw, on the Christian side, groups of soldiers fast gathering together, and as they so, posting themselves in a line on the inner side of the deep trench filled with the waters of the Orontes, which served as the main protection against any surprise being attempted on that part of the encampment peculiarly appropriated to females.

They observed that on the other side of the entrenchment there were thousands of horsemen collected, that these horsemen were divided into squadrons, who came on one after another in incessant movement, each squadron, as it advanced, pouring in a whole flight of arrows on the Christians,

and as it did so instantly wheeling round, and flying back with all speed, so as to be out of the reach of a returning discharge of arrows from the Christians. By this manœuvre, not only did the thick flight of arrows from each particular Turkish squadron strike down a number of Christians wherever it fell, but the attention of the Christians was so distracted, that they knew not where to aim with effect, nor on what point of the assailed line to collect in sufficient strength to prevent the Turkish cavalry from crossing the entrenchment.

“Alas ! alas !” sighed Philip, as he looked back upon the battle field, “our men cannot long resist an attack like this. The only chance is, that the noise of the combat may arouse our leaders, Baldwin, and Bohemond, and Tancred, and Robert of Normandy, in sufficient time to take revenge on the infidels for the injury they are sure now to do.”

As he spoke these words, he observed at a distance behind the squadrons of advancing and retreating Turks, a large man mounted on a powerful war-horse, which, like himself, was covered with plated armour; and behind that man he perceived riding, as if in immediate attendance upon him, one hundred of the celebrated warriors, the *Agulani*—that is, man and horse so completely covered with an impenetrable armour, that they heeded neither lance, nor sword, nor arrow; and who never carried into battle any other weapon than a sharp cutting sword. At the same moment that Philip noticed this man, he saw, or fancied he saw, the man point with his hand towards himself and his two companions; and at the same time he observed the evolutions of the whole of

the attacking party changed, for all were, as if by a preconcerted signal, recalled. The discharge of arrows ceased. The entire body of assailants, that had been split into squadrons, was combined into one long, unbroken line, in the centre of which was the one that Philip regarded as the commander, with his Agulani. And then, with one fearful shout, down came the whole of the Turkish force to the entrenchment; a general discharge of arrows took place, and as they whizzed with a deadly aim at the Christian soldiers marshalled on the brink of the entrenchment, and thus caused many awful gaps in the Christian line, the Turkish cavalry plunged into the deep ditch; there was a heavy striking of shields and lances, and, in a minute afterwards, the Turks were seen cutting and hacking down the Christian infantry; and as they did so, Philip beheld the Turkish commander and his Agulani pushing on at a rapid pace, and in a compact body, towards the spot in which he stood with Gunhilda and Amine.

Philip, in his despair, looked round, conscious that no human aid could now reach him in sufficient time to preserve his charge from outrage. He felt that his own life could not be prolonged for many minutes, but he also felt he was about to die in a noble cause, and determined that he should at least take the life of one infidel before he lost his own. Unable to defend, he hoped the outrage he could not prevent would be at least avenged; and, therefore, it was with a feeling of satisfaction, that he recognized, fast speeding towards where he stood, Guy of Mascon at the head of two hundred foot soldiers, and that he beheld, although at a great distance, the white-crossed red banner of Bohemond at last in motion.

"There—there she is!" said one in the armour of an Agulani, as he rode by the side of the commander of the Turks. "Do you strike down her knight, while I seize and carry her back to Antioch."

"Be it so, Alexander," replied Baghi Sian: "but first mark with what ease my good lance shall perforate him, who, for the nonce, stands by her side as her knight."

"Hold! Know you that dame who stands by her side? She seems a noble, but an aged lady," remarked Baghi Sian.

"I know her not," answered Alexander; but look you, Selim," said the Greek, turning to a second of the Agulani, who rode by his side, "the elder lady bears a treasury of jewelry upon her. What think you of carrying her off, and despoiling her? Her ransom afterwards would add to our wealth."

"Good," replied Selim; "I will do it."

These few words passed as the Turkish squadron of Agulani were advancing in a quick gallop towards Philip of Brefney and the two trembling woman who cowered behind him.

"Let no man touch the soldier with the green cross on his helmet, but myself," said Baghi Sian. He then set his lance in rest, and urging on his horse to its full speed, he rushed on Philip of Brefney, exclaiming:—

"Die slave, as thou art!"

"Not unavenged," replied Philip, as he met man and horse with the sweep of his battle-axe, chopping off the top of Baghi Sian's lance with the blade, striking the head of the horse with the axe, and as man and horse came tumbling to the earth, plunging

the point with such sure aim into the breast-armour of Baghi Sian, that though it did not penetrate to flesh, the blow knocked him senseless to the earth, pouring, as he fell, a torrent of blood from mouth and nostrils. At the same instant, twenty horsemen drove at Philip, and ran him down, their sharp swords rattling upon helmet, shield, and hauberk as he fell, and leaving him without sense or motion by the side of Baghi Sian. At the self-same moment, the shrieking women were seized, and each, caught up from the ground, was placed, the one in front of Alexander, the other of Selim ; and as they dashed away in different directions, Alexander cried to the Agulina to bear with them the body of their commander, and never slacken rein until they had placed him in care of a physician in the citadel.

The Agulani having charge of their commander, kept in a body together, and as they did so, flights of arrows followed them in her retreat from the men and archers under the command of Guy of Mascon, who now reached the spot on which lay the apparently lifeless body of Philip of Brefney.

Eagerness in the pursuit of a foe, carelessness as to the loss of life, indifference as to human suffering, were characteristics of Guy of Mascon, which he had acquired by a long career in camps ; still it was not without a bitter pang that he gazed upon the senseless form before him.

“Poor Philip of Brefney !” he said, “thou hast fallen in a noble cause, seeking to save women from oppression. Thy death is not less noble, because thou hast died in defending her whose mysterious fate had evoked thy sympathy. But, eh ! What is this ?

A groan; I am rejoiced to note that indication of pain. He breathes. Here—Richard, Bernard, back—back with Philip to the tent of Father Francis, and as you bear him, pray the blessed Virgin that the life of him who has suffered as a champion of purity may be spared to aid in rescuing the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of infidels.”

At that instant Bohemond, the Price of Tarentum, rode up at the head of fifty knights.

“Ah! my prince,” said Guy of Mascon, “this is a doleful night for us Christians. The infidels have broken into our encampment, they are even now slaying women and children in their tents, and they have carried off, or rather they are even now carrying away with them, Princess Gunhilda, wife of your illustrious companion in arms, Duke Baldwin of Boulogne.”

“What! the Princess Gunhilda a prisoner in the hands of infidels. Oh! tell me not it is too late to rescue her.”

“I think it is not,” replied Guy of Mascon; “she and a female companion stood here but a few minutes since. They have been borne off by different ways, and I suppose in opposite directions. One of them is no longer visible; but the other is *there*,” and he pointed at a distance to the figure of an armed man, having a woman before him, on horseback. “Which of them it is I know not; but that man can certainly be overtaken. He cannot easily pass the wide trench with a horse so laden. *That woman* at least can be rescued.”

“To the rescue! On, knights!—for God and our Lady! God wills it,” cried the brave Bohemond, as

he dashed forward at full speed, and the horsemen rushed after him, as if each were running for a prize.

"Quick! quick! my men," said Guy, "to the trench straight before us; so that we may cross to the opposite side, and meet the Turks as they are driven out of the camp by our knights and soldiers who are now gathering on all sides to assail them. As they retreat, we can greet them with the spear-point and sword-blade; take from them the women and spoil they have seized, and, as I trust, not leave a man of them alive to tell of the injuries they have been able to inflict upon us. Meanwhile, as we advance, we can watch the chase in which the Prince Bohemond is engaged. See, see—he and his valiant knights gain considerably upon the caitiff who is bearing off the lady. The wretch perceives his life is in danger. See how constantly he looks back upon his pursuers; see how eagerly he pushes for the trench.

"I doubt if he will ever reach it in time to pass in safety.

"Eh! yes, he will—his horse bears him bravely. See—see!—he has reached the edge of the ditch. He has, alas! time enough to look out for the safest ford. See—see!—he stops; he is on the point of crossing. Oh! miserable sight! our knights never can be in time to overtake him.

"Oh! accursed villain! he has found a fordable place. Look, look! he turns his head, and derisively waves an adieu to his pursuers.

"See, see!—hurra! hurra! hurra!

"Bravo, Bohemond! better aim than that was never taken. Oh! flower of chivalry! glory of the

Christian army! never was a finer stroke than that struck.

“See, see!—horse, and man, and woman are all now rolling on the ground. Oh, valiant Bohemond! none but thyself would have thought of doing *that*. See how dexterously he has cast—and at such a distance, too!—his mace between the feet of the flying steed—breaking them to pieces, I warrant. Poor brute! it will never more put hoof to ground.

“And then the woman! I marvel is she is killed by the fall. Well—there was no other way of saving her; for far better is it for a Christian woman to be slain on Christian ground, and receive Christian burial, than live as a slave in the palace of a beastly Turk.

“But as to the caitiff, where is he? I see the horse plunging in its agony—I see the form of a woman lying motionless on the ground; but where is the infidel? Oh! I suppose his body has rolled into the water. There let him die and drown; thence speed to Satan, and announce to the demons of the lower regions that, before another hour has passed away, they shall be joined by spirits as evil and as malignant as themselves.

“Come, men—now to catch the retreating Turks unawares. Here cross the entrenchment; and now here steal silently forward, until we get close to the point at which the great body of them has crossed, and by which the miscreants are sure to return. Then let us lie down; and then, when I give the signal, rush upon them—spare not the life of one single man; slaughter them as if they were mad

dogs. No mercy for them, who have shown neither pity nor mercy for man, nor woman, nor child.

The exhortation of Guy of Mascon to be pitiless to the Turkish foeman was addressed to willing auditors; for the outrage done by attacking the female encampment was regarded as a gratuitous personal wrong inflicted on each individual. The manœuvre he had suggested was observed by the commander of the Crusaders, Baldwin; and whilst the cavalry attacked the Turks in the camp, bodies of infantry were sent to intercept them in their flight.

The Turks were engaged in despoiling the tents—in slaying children and women wherever they encountered those helpless creatures; when on a sudden they heard pouring down upon them the charge of hundreds of mounted men, with that cry which was now fearful in their ears, “God wills it!” The moment the awful rushing sound and cry were heard, they hurried from the tents, gathered together, and, drawing up in a compact mass, awaited the charge of the Christian knights. Lance after lance crossed, and the ring of shields was followed by an outburst of steeds without their riders, and a cry of agony as the foaming war-horses crushed beneath their hoofs the limbs and faces of the dying and the wounded; and with that crash of lance and shield came the heavy blow of mace, and the clash and hack of swords, and the death-thrust followed by a hollow groan; and then the Turkish horsemen were routed!—and they rode with desperation to the trench—the ring of blade, and the crunching fall of battle-axes riving helmets pursuing them as they fled! And then came, when they had crossed the trench, the

wild, furious shouts in their ears, as spears plunged into their horses' sides, and the sword flashed before their eyes, and then gashed them to death. They sought to turn back from whence they had fled; and then again there was the long lance of the knights to pierce them; and they turned again from the lance to encounter the spear and sword and dagger of the foot soldier: and then, in their despair, they cast from them sword and shield, and were hewed down with as little mercy as if they had still continued to fight on. Upon that occasion, says an ancient chronicler, the Turks were cut down as "the ripe harvest falls before the sickle of the reaper. They fled, and they were pursued; for the fugitive ever finds a follower; and so eager were our men in the pursuit, that they who had commenced the battle as infantry, seized upon the horses of their foes, and thus, speeding after the enemy, inflicted death upon them."

That event which had begun a disaster ended a complete victory. In the city of Antioch the conflict was followed by grief and lamentations; whilst in the camp of the Christians there were lamentations and great rejoicings.

Amine had been saved—a second time saved—from the pursuit of Baghi Sian, and twice had she been rescued from the hands of the Greek, by the same valiant knight, Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum.

But as to the Lady Gunhilda—what had become of her? Alas! who can depict the grief of her attendants, and who portray the agony of Amine, when she was told her friend, her benefactress, was no longer to be found in the encampment of the Christians?

CHAPTER X.

THE BISHOP OF PUY.

ADELMAR DE MONTEIL, Bishop of Puy-en-Velay, was descended from a noble and illustrious family in the south of France. He had been the first to solicit, in the Council of Clermont, permission to proceed on the holy pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and the first to receive, in consequence of that request, the cross as a Crusader, from the hands of the pontiff, Urban II.

The Pope being unable personally to take part in the Crusade, Adelmarr was named as the representative of his Holiness in the army of the Crusaders; and all contemporary historians concur in declaring that no happier, wiser, nor better choice could possibly have been made. Courageous as the bravest of warriors—shrinking from no danger in which they participated—he won their respect by his valour, their veneration by his piety, their obedience by the soundness of his judgment and the justice of his views. His actions, his words, nay, it might be said, even his very looks, were becoming his high and influential position of a Papal Legate. A sage in council, a general in the field, a priest at all times, he moved in the midst of the Crusaders an object of universal love and unceasing admiration. Conspicuous for every great quality which render their possessor worthy of esteem, he was beyond all other things remarkable for his humility and his piety. His example, his counsel, and his exhortations, contributed at

all times, and under every variety of circumstances, to maintain order and to preserve discipline in the army of the Crusaders, as well as to secure harmony of action amongst its various leaders.

Adelmar brought with him, in the expedition to Jerusalem, his own vassals ; and, previous to his departure for the Holy Land, which took place towards the close of the month of October, in the year of our Lord 1096, he composed a glorious hymn, in which he implored the intercession of the Queen of Heaven for himself, his followers, and his fellow-Crusaders. That hymn still remains a constant prayer with us, through the care of the Church, and is daily repeated by almost every Catholic in all parts of the world. That hymn is the *Salve Regina*—"HAIL, HOLY QUEEN." Such as *he* wrote it, *we* still recite it, with the additional words of the great Saint Bernard. The invocation in the prayer is the composition of Adelmar, Bishop of Puy ; the final exclamation, *O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria*—"OH! MOST CLEMENT! MOST PIUS! MOST SWEET VIRGIN MARY!"—emanates from the fervent piety of St. Bernard.

In accordance with the suggestion of this good knight and pious bishop, laws were established for the guidance of the Crusaders' camp, such as were unknown, and necessarily unheard of, in the annals of warfare. By those laws it was declared, that "no one should, either in weight, or in measure, or in any money dealing, cheat, circumvent, or defraud his brother Christian ; that no theft should be committed ; no commandment of God violated ; and if any should be found transgressing these laws, the most severe

punishments should be inflicted upon them; and so *the people of God* be sanctified—neither stained with impurity nor dishonoured by fraud.”

These were not the mere announcements of vain-glorious men, who seem to think they have satisfied the demands of justice when, instead of punishing the guilty, they denounce their crimes in a *republican proclamation*, such as the enemies of the Papacy in latter times issued at Rome against their own confederates—repudiating in gazettes what they had in secret advised; officially condemning assassinations that they in their hearts had approved, and by their writings had excited. The decrees of Adelmar for the defence of honesty and the security of chastity were, in sooth, *acts*; and he or she who violated them were made, by bitter punishments, to bewail their offences.

The poorest man—the weakest woman who had assumed the cross, was, in the estimation of Adelmar, an object of greater love, of tenderer care, and of more incessant solicitude than the mightiest monarchs then reigning in Europe. The care of each was regarded as his own care; their poverty was relieved out of his own wealth; and any calamity that befel them more deeply felt and more severely mourned for than if it had fallen upon himself, or those who were more closely connected with him.

When such were the feelings as regarded all, it may be surmised what bitter agony he experienced in learning how many calamities the sudden sally of the Turks had caused to the Christians; and beyond all other calamities, that which was *then* regarded as the greatest of all, viz., that a noble Christian female,

like the lady Gunhilda, should have fallen into the hands of brutal and unbelieving Mahommedans.

For many hours after these last doleful tidings had reached him, the Bishop of Puy had remained alone in that portion of his tent which he never used but for the purpose of prayer and meditation. There had he stayed, with the express command to his attendants that he was not to be disturbed, unless upon urgent business connected with the case of persons who had suffered from the recent calamity.

At length he was told that Father Francis of the Benedictine Order, followed by two monks, desired permission to be admitted to his presence.

The three monks instantly were shown into the part of the tent which served as an antechamber to that which was enclosed as the bishop's oratory.

To Father Francis there was nothing in the room to which he was admitted to excite his attention. It was not so, however, with one of the monks, who looked, from his height and slender figure, to be some one very young in years, who had, by an especial grace, been permitted to take the vows of a religious. To the latter, evidently a stranger, everything that he saw was a matter of surprise, for there were combined together the arms of the Crusader with the sacred calling of the churchman. In the same apartment there was the crozier, and beside it a rich ivory-hilted sword and scabbard, inlaid gorgeously, representing scriptural subjects. The bishop's mitre was on a table—and strewed upon a couch were the steel-ringed hauberk and leggings of a full-clad knight. There was the lance on one side, and not far from it the purple cap of a bishop. Resting upon

a small shield there was a huge missal; and the whole apartment afforded the proof that its owner was at the same time a warrior and a priest.

The stranger was so busily engaged in examining the different articles within, that he did not hear the folds of the tent drawn aside, and was only aware the bishop himself was present by seeing the other two monks on their knees to receive his blessing. The stranger knelt with them, and was surprised to see that the Bishop of Puy, so remarkable for the unflinching patience with which he had borne all fatigues, was a man past the middle age of life, and who was long suffering from bad health.

The Bishop of Puy blessed the three monks, and then in a voice that was as soft, sweet, and musical as a tinkling bell, he said, "Rise, my children—be seated while you speak to me, I pray of you to do so, as it is an excuse for me to rest my limbs, that a failing constitution forbids me to exercise as I would desire."

In the accents that thus addressed them, the stranger observed all that unction of charity and piety which had won for Adelmarr the love and respect of every good man that approached him. The stranger ventured to look up at the person who so spoke to the humble monks whose lives were devoted to mortification and to good works, and whose unvarying rule is "obedience." He saw before him a noble and tall personage—tall beyond the common standard of men, and whose high forehead, pale and polished as marble, and untouched by a single wrinkle, towered over thick dark brown eye-brows, that covered, as if with a pent-house, two large full light-

blue eyes, which seemed, except in a state of excitement, when they flashed up with brilliancy, to be the mirror of the meek spirit which conveyed to them its ever kindly expression. The nose was high and prominent, the lips thin and bloodless, the cheeks hollow, and showing that sickness was endured, as well as self-mortification imposed by the good Bishop of Puy. The stranger observed that the prelate wore the purple cope of a bishop, whilst all the rest of his person was covered with a white surplice, through which was discernible a purple cassock.

"My gracious Lord," said Father Francis, "this stranger has desired an interview with you. Its purport is known to me; but it is better that it should be explained to your lordship alone; and, therefore, if it be your pleasure, my brother and I shall remain here whilst you permit the stranger to enter the oratory with you. When the stranger's business is despatched, we can conduct him from this place."

"Be it as thou sayest, Father Francis," replied the bishop; "only oblige me by you and our good brother reposing yourselves. You are, at all times, a-foot to serve others—now rest yourselves to oblige me. Come," said the bishop to the stranger, "follow me."

The bishop withdrew the folds of the tent, and then held them for the stranger to pass; and, as he did so, the bishop advanced a few paces, and then kneeling down on both his knees, he prostrated himself on the ground, and kissed it. He then rose, advanced about three steps farther into the room—again knelt down, and again kissed the ground. He again rose, and advancing still more into the apart-

ment, he, a third time, knelt down, and a third time kissed the ground ; and then turning to the stranger monk, who had imitated his actions in every respect, he said :—

“Judging of thee, brother, by the sacred garb with which thou art clothed, I need not remind thee in Whose Presence we now both stand.” And, as he said these words, he pointed to an altar, on which there was a light burning to indicate that the Blessed Sacrament was in the tabernacle.

“Alas ! my Lord and Bishop,” said the stranger, kneeling down, “permit me to remain in this posture, for I am not worthy to stand in your presence, much less to appear in HIS ;” and the stranger pointed to the tabernacle.

“Then, art thou not a monk ?” said the bishop.

“Alas ! my gracious Lord, I am not even a Christian, although desirous to be worthy of being received as such,” replied the stranger.

“And wherefore, if thou wishest to be a Christian, art thou not one ?” asked the bishop.

“Because,” replied the stranger, “Father Francis says I am not yet sufficiently well instructed to be baptized.”

“And was it with the intention of being examined by me that thou hast come here ? if so, rise, my dear child, I am willing to undertake the task.”

“Ah ! no, gracious bishop, that was not the main purpose why I desired to see you ; but I wish to undertake a mission of some peril—in doing so, I desire to have your permission and your blessing ; and I hope that, under the circumstances in which I am placed, the sacrament of baptism may be bestowed upon me.”

"I do not understand you, child," replied the bishop, puzzled by this address; "I have no jurisdiction over you—my permission cannot be necessary; and then you speak of a mission of peril, and disguised as a monk. You tell me you are not a Christian; I pray you explain yourself."

"I am," replied the stranger, "the same person who was wounded a short time ago in the attempt to cross the Orontes, who was conveyed a prisoner to the Christian camp, and transferred to the care of the Lady Gunhilda."

"What! exclaimed the bishop, "you then are Amine. How came Father Francis to permit the robes of his order to be so profaned?"

"Father Francis knows the purity of my motives—he approves of them, and I trust so will your lordship when I explain them," continued the stranger.

"I am, my Lord, the daughter of Feroz, an emir holding high rank in Antioch, and to whom is confided the care of the towers fronting the female quarter of the encampment. My unhappy father is a renegade. He was a Christian. He is a Mahomedan."

The bishop started at these words.

"He is," continued Amine, "a Mahomedan by profession; but my belief is, he has never from his heart abjured Christianity; for he has, notwithstanding the suspicion it excited against him, never united with other renegades, nor with the Turks themselves, in persecuting Christians. I have the hope, when he finds that I am a Christian, of converting him—of inducing him to abandon those with whom he is now associated, and to return a repentant sinner—a sinner truly repentant to that Holy Church

which the wicked-passions of youth induced him to forsake. I wish, then, at the peril of my life, to seek and make my way into Antioch, so that I may see and speak with my father. That I intend to do for his soul's sake—happy! thrice happy! if I can give to my father life for life; and be the means whereby he may save his soul, which, if he remains as he is, must be lost for ever. But this, my Lord, is not the only good I hope to accomplish. My kind and generous protectress—my noble benefactress—she who was my teacher in the truths of Christianity, and whose own acts illustrated its precepts of charity—even she is now a prisoner in Antioch. Such, at least, is my belief, because it was from thence the attack was made by those who have carried her away. I hope to be able to touch my father's heart, to induce him to labour as I would desire—first, to discover where she is concealed; and then to devise the means how she may be released, and again restored to her husband, her country, and her friends. These, my Lord, are my motives for seeking to gain admission into Antioch. I cannot, I know, do so, without peril. Hence it is that I have entreated the use of this robe from Father Francis. My intention is, so disguised, to approach, as if in ignorance, so close to the walls of Antioch, that I may be arrested, and when arrested, demand permission to see the commander of the nearest post: that nearest post shall be where my father is stationed. I shall thence obtain leave to speak to him alone, and when alone, then the event must depend not upon my tears, my prayers, nor my wishes, but upon the will of God alone, Who orders everything for the best. But let

me, Lord, I beseech you, set out on this perilous journey, not as I am—but as I can alone be safe, as a Christian, fortified with the sacraments, and strengthened with the prayers of the one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.”

“My child,” replied the bishop, “thy zeal is fervent, and thy charity is great, when in the hope of saving thy father’s soul, and rescuing a stranger from captivity, thou art willing to risk, perchance, lose thy life. Such zeal and such charity fit thee to be a Christian. Here, take this small piece of parchment; upon it thou wilt find written the Nicene creed. Read attentively every word in it. Consider carefully every proposition contained in it. Retire now—but return in three hours with those who wait without; and if, at the end of that time, thou canst say, with faith and truth, every word contained in that creed, then I myself shall pour the saving waters of baptism upon thy head. Go, my child; meanwhile my prayers shall be offered up for thee, for thy conversion, and for the success of the noble, glorious mission to which thou hast devoted thyself.”

Amine arose hastily from her knees, rushed from the apartment, and then hurried her conductors—the two monks—from the bishop’s tent.

Amine and the monks had not long departed from the presence of the bishop, when he was again required to appear in the antechamber.

A man, whose face was wan, as if with hunger, his hair dishevelled, his person covered with rags, and his feet bare, appeared before the bishop, and said:—

“My Lord, and the Bishop of Puy, under these

miserable habiliments, and in this wasted, wretched form, it is, I know, difficult to recognize a Christian priest. Yet such I am, and as such I have long laboured for the salvation of the Christians who now groan in slavery in Antioch. I have had, my Lord and Bishop, a vision, which I am compelled to tell you, and for that purpose have fled from Antioch, to which place, when I have narrated to you my vision, I shall endeavour to return, even though I should lose my life in the attempt.

"This, my Lord and Bishop, was my vision, and I pray you to give to it a patient hearing.

"Upon a certain night, I was in the church of the ever Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, and in that church a deep sleep fell upon me; and in that sleep there stood by my side OUR LORD Himself, and with Him were his most pious Mother, and the blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles.

"And the Lord asked me, if I knew who He was?

"And I replied, I did not.

"He then said a word, and there suddenly appeared rays of light surrounding His head on all sides; and these resplendent rays were in the form of a Cross, such as we see them in pictures representing our Saviour. And then He again asked me did I know Him? and I replied, Yea, for I see that now in reality which formerly I only beheld painted in pictures; and then I said, Thou art my Lord.

"‘I AM,’ he replied.

"And I instantly cast myself at His feet, and I besought of Him to have pity and compassion upon us all, who were now suffering great misery, and enduring great afflictions.

“‘Yea,’ he replied, ‘it is well what has been endured, and relief shall not long be delayed. By My impulse this expedition was undertaken. By My means Nicea was besieged and taken. Through Me were many victories; and triumphantly have I conducted the Christians before the walls of Antioch. But how have I been repaid? Sinners have been tolerated amongst the Crusaders, those who called themselves Christians have acted badly towards Christians, and others have plunged themselves, souls and bodies, into the most detestable vices. Up to this time, the invincible Virgin, the unceasing intercessor for the human race, and Peter, he who holds the keys of heaven, the especial bishop of Antioch, have prayed and besought of the Almighty God that He would permit consolation to be afforded to His suffering people.’

“And here the blessed Peter spoke, and said:— ‘Let the Lord be mindful of His Majesty, and with what dire deeds my house in the city has been contaminated; how pagans have offended Thy Majesty, and how Thy altars have been profaned with blood, and by manifold sins.’

“And then the Lord said to me:—‘Go, and say to my people, let them repent from the bottom of their hearts; let them put sinners away from the midst of them; and pity shall be taken upon them, and aid afforded them, and the days of their sorrow be at an end. Let the Litanies be renewed, let that response of the Church be repeated by each: Our enemies are gathered together, and boast in their strength. Do thou, O Lord! destroy their strength, and disperse them, in order that they may know there

is none to fight for us unless it be Thou, O Lord God ! Disperse them by Thy virtue, and destroy them, O God ! who art our Protector.'

"This, O Bishop of Puy, was the vision I had ; and let me add, that if any doubt as to its verity suggest itself to your mind, I, in the full conviction of its truth, am prepared to submit to any examination which your wisdom may suggest, and to abide the ordeal by fire, or to cast myself from a high precipice, confident that I shall pass through both dangers alike unscathed, and perfectly harmless."

The Bishop of Puy looked on the man who had thus addressed him, for a long time in silence, and then said :—"Thy words are strange, thy vision still more 'strange, and thou thyself utterly unknown. There is one ordeal more awful than burning fire or steep precipice, and that is to take in thy hands the Gospels and Holy Cross, and on them to swear that what thou hast narrated thou dost really and sincerely believe to be the truth. Go, kneel before the altar ; pray there ; I shall soon be with thee ; and according to the examination into thy narrative, test thee as I have said. If thou art such as thou hast declared thyself to be, then Heaven seems to have sent thee to aid in the accomplishment of our task of filial piety."

The priest being so commanded, proceeded to the oratory, and there cast himself prostrate on the steps of the altar.

The Bishop of Puy remained in the antechamber, musing upon the strange words that had been addressed to him ; but his meditation was not permitted to be of long duration, for again he was inter-

rupted by the information, that one of the oldest soldiers in the army of the Crusaders desired to speak with him, and Guy of Mascon in a few minutes afterwards knelt to receive the Bishop's blessing, and his withered lips touched with love and veneration the episcopal ring.

"My Lord and Bishop," said Guy of Mascon, in his rough, strong voice, "I desired to speak with you on a matter which deeply affects the safety of us all."

"Speak, Guy of Mascon," mildly replied the bishop, in a soft, dulcet voice, which was a contrast to that of the veteran soldier, which constant exercise in the open air, and the loud commands given in the field, had rendered, even in common conversation, hoarse and loud.

"My Lord Bishop," continued Guy of Mascon, "there are flagrant sinners, abominable miscreants, atrocious villains in our camp."

"Indeed!" said the bishop. "This is strange news to me; and yet, but this very moment, I have received, through another person, warning to the same effect."

"Ah!" continued Guy, not mincing his phrases in the slightest degree because he was speaking to a bishop. "There are villains amongst us, who, although they wear the Cross, would willingly crucify every man of us, because we are seeking to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from miscreants as great, but not one whit worse than themselves."

"What proofs hast thou of what thou now affirmest?" asked the Bishop of Puy.

"Listen to me, good Bishop, patiently," replied

Guy, "and I shall produce to you proofs in abundance. Do you remember my capturing and wounding a young infidel woman, disguised in male attire, who was swimming in the Orontes?"

"Oh ! I have"—replied the bishop, smiling—"a distinct recollection of that circumstance."

"Well, my Lord Bishop, when I arrested that young imp of Satan, I discovered from her that there was an expedition marching from Araca, with the intention of throwing a fresh supply of provisions into the besieged city of Antioch, and that wicked girl was on her way to Antioch to tell them the news, so that the Turks in Antioch, acting on the intelligence, might, as they did last night, make a sudden attack on our lines, and so, by means of the confusion thus produced, assaulted as we should have been from the garrison soldiers on the one side, and by the soldiers of Corbohan from Araca, on the other, not be able to prevent the convoy of provisions reaching the besieged city. By arresting the unbelieving woman, I had deprived the Antioch Turks of information that would have been useful to them ; and, at the same time, I had gained for the Christians information, which, if acted upon, would not only have inflicted great loss on the enemy, but would also have obtained for us, famishing Christian soldiers, that of which we stood so much in need, an abundant supply of food."

"You conducted yourself, in that instance, worthy of your ancient reputation as a practised warrior," remarked the bishop ; "but why were not the Turks, as you had planned, defeated ? and why were not the provisions procured ?"

"Why were they not?" said the indignant Guy of Mascon, unable to restrain his rage, "because, as I have already told you, we have in our camp the most infernal villains in the universe; because there are to be seen in the very midst of us miscreants who wear the Cross on their shoulders, but who should, if they met with their deserts, be plunged into cauldrons, and boiled to death; because there are wretches, who pretend to be saying their prayers to our God, and yet who are heart and soul worshippers of Mahomet and Mammon. Why did not my plan succeed? Because a skulking spy heard as plainly as one of my own soldiers what the wicked Mahomedan woman had said, and he must have conveyed the intelligence both to the garrison at Antioch, and the Turks marching from Araca, and so prevented us, Christians, as we were prepared to do, to give them battle, and, of course, to slaughter every living man amongst them."

"And whom do you suspect to be the spy who, disguised as a Christian, gives information of what is passing in the Christian camp to the Turks?" asked the bishop.

"Ah! I know who I suspect," replied Guy; "but I do not know who he is; for I have never seen him from that day to the present. Be assured, if I do meet with him again, he shall not be a quarter of an hour afterwards alive; for I hope to place him at once before you, and once you have looked at him, then to pass my sword-blade between his head and his shoulders."

"Oh! Guy, Guy," said the bishop, "you must take care that your zeal does not mislead you—that

you do not sacrifice an innocent man to an unjust suspicion."

"I shall take care that a man I know to be guilty does not escape," answered Guy. "The circumstances I refer to could not be betrayed to the enemy but by the villain to whom I allude. He was the only one that could, by any possibility, know what passed on the banks of the Orontes. No other could have heard of it. None, I am sure, heard but my own soldiers, and I know every man of them. They are all pure Christians—all, heart and soul, true Crusaders—willing every one to lay down his life, so that he may advance, by the sacrifice, the holy cause in which he is engaged, even by a single inch. No, no; there was but one spy and one traitor on that day—that I am sure of; and that man, when next we meet, shall lose his life, or I mine—he shall receive the fitting punishment for his misdeeds, or, by my death, escape. Oh! that this hand, old and feeble as it is, were but for five minutes on the unbeliever's throat. What an example I would make of him to other villains like himself, who are at this moment in our encampment."

"Other villains!" exclaimed the bishop, "then dost thou really think there are others amongst us as bad as the man thou describest?"

"Other villains, forsooth!" replied Guy; "why, my Lord Bishop, the camp is swarming with them; and I doubt—pardon me for my boldness—if you should any longer wink at the iniquity which I may say, is practised under your own eyes."

"Proceed, Guy, proceed," gently remarked the bishop; "I like to hear thee talk thus. It is the

duty of an honest man to warn his superior of any laxity in manners that may have escaped his own observation, or that may be attributable to his supineness. Proceed then, Guy—speak out frankly not only all thou knowest, but all thou thinkest, and all that thou hast good cause to suspect is an evil tolerated, allowed, or sanctioned, or practised in the midst of us.”

“So encouraged, my Lord,” said Guy, “I will speak candidly and plainly to you of what I can prove to be great evils in our Christian encampment. I can make it as plain as that I am now speaking, that we live in the midst of thieves, and traitors; and both hitherto have escaped observation, much less detection, because they are supposed to be—what they are not—Crusaders. Your lordship is aware of the outrage that was last night committed on the Christians encampment. It was attacked by three distinct bodies, all carrying on the same mode of warfare. The first was a body of horsemen, that contented itself with discharging missiles at our soldiers; but that body never passed the entrenchments. The second was composed of a hundred *Agulani*, whose main purpose, I believe, was to take the Lady Gunhilda prisoner; and who, having succeeded in that object, retired as speedily as they had advanced. No one suffered by their assault, but a young Irish knight, Philip of Brefney, who now lies in his tent, greatly contused, but not dangerously wounded. The third was composed of seven hundred horsemen, who employed themselves in pillaging the tents, and slaying whatever women and children they encountered. Well, my Lord and Bishop, I am

happy to tell you, that of the seven hundred wretches that crossed into our entrenchments, who employed themselves in the pillage of the camp, and in the murder of helpless women and unoffending children, there has not one—no, not a single man—returned alive to Antioch. I had the satisfaction this morning of presiding at the decapitation of the seven hundred dead bodies; their heads are now on poles, so as that they may be seen by their comrades in Antioch. Of these seven hundred heads, there has been a tithe of seventy appropriated to you, as a demonstration how anxious the Crusaders are to avenge the wrongs of those who are peculiarly confided to your care,”

“Thanks,” said the bishop, “for your tithe offering. Say to the brave soldiers engaged in defeating the invaders of the women’s tent, they shall have this day distributed amongst them by me seventy marks of gold.”

“I am sure,” replied Guy, “they will feel grateful to you for your generosity; but here my Lord, is the proof that there are thieves, at the least—as I think, traitors—in the midst of us. The tents were robbed. The Turks, by whom the robbery, in the first instance, was committed, have been slain. Not one of them has lived to carry off the spoil; and yet the spoil is concealed! Not an ounce of gold, of any description was to be found on the body of a dead Turk, when each corpse was examined this morning—whether it lay within the encampment, or in the ditch, or on the plain outside; and yet, as it must be known to your lordship, the tent of the Lady Gunhilda alone was filled with gold, and silver, and priceless gems,

and ornaments more precious by their make and the cunning skill with which they were contrived, than on account of the rich materials of which they were composed. Now, all these have disappeared—there is not a particle of them to be found in any part of the camp. The Turks did not take them : the Turks did not take away even their own heads,” said Guy of Mascon, with a grim smile ; “ then who has taken these treasures ?—Who can have taken them but villains who are in the midst of us, and who are now unknown to your lordship and the princes and generals who head our expedition ? ”

“ Thy reasoning, Guy,” observed the bishop, “ appears to me to be unanswerable. I agree with thee : the spoliators are in the midst of us. But who can they be ? It is not—cannot be possible, that any man who duly prepared himself for this great and holy pilgrimage—who, before he assumed the cross, and girt himself with the sword as a soldier of Christ had fortified himself with the sacraments ;—it is not possible any such can now have fallen so low, and become so base, as to sell his hopes of salvation in order that he may unduly possess himself, for a few years, or days, or perchance hours, of the property of another.”

“ The true Crusader at Clermont,” said Guy of Mascon, “ is still a Crusader at Antioch. No man who has ever shot an arrow, levelled a lance, or drawn a sword against the infidels, has dishonoured the cross on his right shoulder, by permitting his hand dishonestly to grasp any property belonging to a brother Christian. No, no ; the wretches are not to be found among those who fight your battles ; but

the wretches, I have no doubt, if sought for will be found to be some of those strong and able-bodied idle fellows who follow our camps, and live, or pretend to live, upon the alms of the benevolent. Beggars, my Lord and Bishop, have been allowed to swarm in hundreds in all parts of the camp; and with those beggars there are pilgrims, of whom I will only say this, that if they are able to march along with us, they should also be compelled to fight along with us. Why should they be allowed to hang on the skirts of the Christian army when it is going into battle? Why should they be so privileged, who, in a moment of danger, are the first to run away; and who, when we gain the victory, are the most active in gathering spoil, and the most urgent in seeking from the famishing soldier, as he rests from his day's fighting a portion of his food? Why, my Lord Bishop, do you tolerate those pilgrims trudging after us wherever we go? why not force them to fight as well as we do?"

"Because," answered the bishop, "their sins may have rendered them unworthy to take part in such a struggle. Remember, there is no man rightfully and duly a participator in this enterprise, but the man who had previously obtained the sanction of his spiritual superior—the religious of his bishop, the layman from his priest: that he who is so prepared, and is slain in these battles, is, in the eyes of the Church, a martyr; and by his pious death has purchased immortality. The pilgrim is almost universally a man performing a penance for some past transgression; and unless we examine into the case of each, we cannot tell in what class of penitents he stands. He may

be one of the weepers (*Flentium*), whose duty it is to remain, during the time of divine service, outside the doors of the church, clothed in sackcloth, lamenting and groaning, and entreating of the faithful, as they enter within the precincts of the church, to offer up their prayers for him ; or he may be one of the auditors (*Auditores*), whose place in the church is in some remote corner set apart from the congregation, and on whose head the priest each day is to lay his hands ; or he may belong to the standers-by (*Consistentium*), who are allowed to unite in prayer with their fellow-Christians, although forbidden to partake with them of the Ever-Blessed Eucharist. To whatever class of penitents these pilgrims may belong, to the first and lowest, or to the last and highest, still to each and all this heavy doom is assigned : they must go barefoot ; they must be thinly and poorly clad ; they must never ride on horseback ; nor travel in any vehicle ; nor wear rich garments—but are bound to weep in sackcloth and ashes. And if the crimes for which they are performing penance are of a grievous character, they must, as long as they live, abstain from flesh meat and wine, and fast every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. How, then, deal with those who may be performing various penances assigned them ? How elevate them to the position of soldiers of Christ ? How dispense with the conditions enjoined upon them to enable them again to be admitted to the marriage feast of the altar ? How do that, when no man can be a true Crusader until he has received the Most Blessed Sacrament ? I cannot make Crusaders of pilgrims whose penance is not completed.”

“Ay,” remarked Guy, “but how know you that

all *are* pilgrims who appear in the garb of pilgrims ? The pious, sincere pilgrim is entitled to respect : but the fault with us is, that we respect the *garb*, without knowing whether it conceals a penitent, a criminal, or an infidel. I have, my Lord and Bishop, been the dupe of one false pilgrim ; and I therefore shall, for the remainder of my life, look with suspicion upon every one who approaches me with scrip and staff."

"But why suspect that there is amongst us more than one false pilgrim ?" asked the bishop.

"To be frank, my Lord and Bishop," replied the blunt Guy, "I am suspicious, because my superiors are inert. Our commander, Godfrey, is said to be as pious as if he were a monk. Admitted that he is so, then I wish he was as vigilant as a monk. There is no monastery but is open to the way-farer and the traveler—the sinner not less than the saint is alike seen to receive food and shelter at the monastery-gate ; and if he require a resting-place at night, a good comfortable spot to repose in is assigned him ; but let the stranger declare that he is a pilgrim, or let him say that he is a priest, then instantly the truth of his story is tested : it is ascertained who he is, whence he came, why he is at that locality at that particular time, and where he is going to, for the whole monastery is not thrown open to such a stranger at once, and without inquiry. If it were, the hospitality of the monks, I have no doubt, would be repaid by finding their treasure-chest despoiled of some of its richest altar ornaments, by a wandering, unbelieving, Berengarian vagabond. We stand, my Lord, in need of the same vigilance being at least exercised over our camp, that is employed in the care of a monastery. Our piety is not equal to that of

the monks, and yet every villain and every wretch is free to come in and go out from amongst us, provided only he pretends to piety; if he assume the garb of a pilgrim, or a religious, or lays claim as a mendicant to our charity, he is challenged by no sentinel and examined by no officer; and the consequence is, the most diabolical crimes are, with impunity, committed—aye, worse crimes than I have even yet hinted at.”

“Worse crimes!” exclaimed the bishop; “say not so Guy, that worse crimes are committed in a camp, in every quarter of which prayers are regularly recited—piety, by word and example, constantly inculcated—and the Holy Sacrifice daily offered up.”

“Does your lordship recollect all the incidents connected with the battle of the Pharfar-bridge, in which we were first defeated, and afterwards obtained so signal a victory over our foes?”

“No,” replied the bishop, “for I was then suffering from a severe sickness, and all I know is, that there was a battle and a victory. Of the incidents I know nothing; and I cannot, I must own to you, Guy, see any connexion between deeds done in the field, and crimes alleged to be committed in the camp.”

“I shall endeavour,” said Guy, “to explain the connexion between them, if you, my Lord and Bishop, will have but patience to listen to the plain story of a blunt soldier.”

“Proceed,” was the only word addressed by the bishop to the veteran warrior.

“Then thus it was,” said the gallant old man, his eye lighting up with all the martial ardour that animated him when about to narrate the events of war.”

“For the purpose,” continued Guy, “of preventing the besieged from making constant sallies against our camp, it was determined to erect a tower which would command that gate of Antioch, from which those eruptions were made with the greatest facility from the enemy. One day, whilst our men were so occupied, they were surprised by a sudden attack from the city. At one moment there fell upon them showers of stones, and javelins, and darts, and heavy beams of wood; and before they could either fly from the danger, or so form themselves as to repel with effect an attack, they were beset on all sides by their foes, slaughtered where they stood, or slain in the attempt to run away. They were followed by hundreds upon hundreds of Turks, who, as they persued, made each blow they inflicted still more bitter by the jibes and jeers upon Christians with which it was accompanied. In that disastrous rout of the Christians, we must, at least, have lost about a thousand men—a loss to us, the survivors; but to the slain themselves a gain, for they won the crown as martyrs. At the news of this disaster which first reached the ears of Prince Bohemond, he gathered together, as he rushed to the scene of carnage, fifty good, brave Christian knights. These knights were few against such a multitude of foemen; but few as they were, each was animated with the spirit, and excited by the self-same rage that inflamed the heart Bohemond at the carnage of beloved comrades. So disposed for battle, that each, as they went, invoked for himself and his fellows the aid of our Lord; and in this manner, and with these thoughts in their mind, they came upon the scene of conflict. The

enemy when they beheld so small a body of men advancing against them, were confident of completing their victory ; and with this intent they closed their ranks together so as to resist the charge of the Christian knights. The knights paused for a moment—it was but for a moment—it was to make the sign of the cross upon their forehead ; and then, with lance in rest, to plunge, as the arrow from the bow flies with a deadly and sure aim, into the opposing masses of the enemy. Nought could resist that charge—back, back, back, in despite of themselves, the boastful enemy was driven to the river, across which the only means of escape was the Pharfar-bridge. And then when the Turks came to that pass, awful was the crash—and frightful the uproar and piercing the screams, as fugitive impeded fugitive in his flight upon the bridge, and some were slain with the lance, and others with the sword, and others by their fall down the precipitous steep to the river, and more were smothered in the waters of the Orontes. And as the knights thus drove them back to destruction, others of our men come to their aid, and rendered that destruction more sure by shooting or knocking down those who clung to the columns of the bridge, or had escaped to the opposite bank by swimming. The slaughter of those vile infidels was awful. The fair waters of the river, as they ran from beneath the bridge, were literally red with blood. Never, in any battle-field, was anything heard like to the clamours and shrieks of victors and of vanquished, such as that day were heard around Pharfar-bridge. The arrows flew in clouds from the Christian ranks, and each arrow brought instant

death or a mortal wound to a flying Turk, to one drowning, or seeking to escape from drowning. On that day the enemy lost not less than twelve of their commanders—those whom they call Emirs; and of the common men their loss was at least a thousand in number. It was a glorious victory; but it was followed by a great scandal, which I am about to narrate to you. Upon the day following this battle, some of the Turks crept out at morning dawn from the city, collected together the bodies of their dead, and buried them on the other side of the Pharfar. According to the custom of their country, they interred with the great men who had been slain, rich and precious ornaments, cloaks embroidered with gold, golden coin, golden-covered quivers, and golden-tipped arrows, and various other things which it is not necessary to mention. Intelligence of what they had done reached the Christian encampment. And then what did some wretches amongst us? they broke open the tombs; they robbed the dead; they mutilated the bodies of the dead. I fear to tell it—but I believe it. They did worse than mutilate the bodies of the dead.”

“Worse than rob and mutilate the bodies of the buried dead!” said the bishop, “I cannot understand what worst crime thou canst suppose those persons to be guilty of.”

“Alas! my Lord and Bishop,” said Guy of Mascon, “I cannot only suppose a worse crime, but I can tell you of a crime—compared with which, this I have spoken will appear actually trivial.”

“Guy,” observed the good bishop, “I begin to fear listening to you.”

"My Lord and Bishop, there is a crime so horrible that human nature shudders to think of it; what say you to men feeding upon the flesh of men?"

"I believe," replied the bishop, turning pale as he spoke, "that such an atrocity has occurred more than once; for I know something of the past history of the past world. But thinkest thou that famine itself could force a Crusader to do that of which thou speakest?"

"I neither speak, nor suggest, nor think aught ill of any *Crusader*," replied Guy. "My suspicions rest upon the pilgrims, that is, the pretended pilgrims—and upon the beggars, that is, the sham beggars that cluster in our camp, or about it. Since the spoliation of the tombs, there have been strong suspicious circumstances to show that the bodies of the dead are fed upon—and trifling incidents, not noticed at the moment, but since then reflected upon, make me believe, that the false pilgrim is one of those man-eaters—and it shall not be——"

"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord."

Such were the words that sounded in whispered, but coarse accents, so close to the back of Guy, that he fancied he could feel an icy breath carrying them to his ear, and chilling him as they came.

The old soldier stood paralyzed for a minute, with staring eyes, and open mouth, an emblem of horror and surprise. At length he recovered himself, turned suddenly round, and in so doing, quickly drew forth his sword. His eye at once detected the opening in the tent, which was an entrance to the oratory, and instantly he dashed into it, perceived the prostrate priest on the altar steps, seized him—forced

the frightened priest to turn round and look at him, and then without uttering one word more, he dashed out of the tent, as if a sudden fit of madness had seized upon him.

The words that had produced so sudden a change in Guy, were unheard by the bishop, and hence the violent outburst on the part of Guy remained unknown to Adelmar.

"Alas!" he exclaimed, "can it be that Guy is afflicted with insanity? He says things that are beyond belief. But let me pause; may it not be that Heaven is pleased to punish us for our supineness, by the many evils we are now enduring? There is a marvellous coincidence between the strange vision of the Antiochean priest and the strange assertions of the shrewd and valiant Guy of Mascon. Both required a rigid investigation. If true, ah! then the guilty must be punished, and the camp purified. But how purified? Let me think: let me think. I have before me the example of the *Latina major*, instituted by St. Gregory the Great—the great priest, the great bishop, the great pontiff; the great foe to the Greek tyrant; the great defender of popular rights in Rome; the great doctor of the Church; the great benefactor to the poor. And then there are the *litanie minores*, in which the mighty Charlemagne, the first Crusader, as we conceive him to be, took part; and then, there are the *processions* of one, I may regard as my own predecessor, of Claudius Mamertus, Bishop of Vienna, by which so many evils were averted: and that are now universally practised by the Church upon our *rogation days*. But I must consult my brother

bishops; and now," said the bishop; as he unfolded the rolls of the tent, and passed into the oratory, "now for the first examination into the vision which this stranger priest has disclosed to me."

CHAPTER XI.

ZARA.

IN the midst of the hills that skirt one side of the city of Antioch, and not ten miles distant from the city itself, there lay the remains of an old fortification, placed in so bad a position—so accessible upon every point but one, where it overlooked a deep ravine, that it was passed and repassed constantly by the contending forces of Turks and Christians, and neither ever stopped to make it a resting-place, much less to occupy it as a military position.

It was to this fortification that the fainting form of the weak and delicate Gunhilda was conveyed by Selim. He bore her within its precincts, and in a chamber that was rudely fitted up, he transferred her to the care of a Turkish woman, now either near or past the middle age of life, but on whose features, still retaining traces of beauty, were marked the impression of passions that had long been indulged. This woman wore a snow-white turban, which made her dark olive skin look still more dark; her perfectly formed person was covered with a pelisse of skin, trimmed with rich fur, and descending below her knees, beneath which were large white trousers

that were fastened at the ankle by thin bracelets of silver, so as to display a small and delicate foot, encased in silver-embroidered slippers; whilst the waist was confined with a richly ornamented girdle, in which was inserted a silver-hilted dagger. The eyes of this woman were large, black, and dazzling, but their expression was marred by a frown, which never departed from the face, and cast its gloom over a small mouth, which never opened but to display two perfect rows of brilliantly white teeth.

Selim, without uttering a word, bore the senseless Gunhilda into the apartment where the woman was seated, and placed his captive on a couch before her.

"What means this?" asked the woman.

"Look *there*," said Selim, pointing to the precious ornaments, with which Gunhilda was decorated. "*These* are *ours*—take them whilst she sleeps."

The woman arose—handled the ornaments—pushed rudely the head of the senseless Gunhilda from one side to the other, in order that she might have a better view of her glittering coronet and diamond-gemmed collar; and then, having satisfied herself as to their value, she looked at Selim, and said:—"They are rare and fine; she is a Christian woman, I suppose."

"Yes," answered Selim; "why do you not take them at once? why not remove them whilst she sleeps?"

"No," replied the Turkish woman, "I will not take them whilst she sleeps. I prefer to wait until she awakes. I shall *then* take them; it will then be a greater pain to her to lose them, when she sees

herself despoiled of them by a stranger, that she knows has no right to wear them."

"It is a woman's thought," said Selim.

"And therefore more cruel, though not so base, as a base man's base deed. Better for a woman to rob a woman openly, than for a man, with a sword by his side, to run away with a woman, and run away from men," was the sharp and caustic reply of the Turkish female.

Selim looked at the handsome, frowning face of her who thus spoke to him; but there was a desperate scowl on her brow, which made him desirous to avoid an angry colloquy; he therefore sought to turn away her wrath, from whatsoever cause arising, by the remark:—

"I have not thy wit, Zara."

"No, nor my spirit either," replied the woman, not in the slightest degree soothed into a calmer temper by the compliment paid to her. "He is but a miserable animal, who has neither the wit of a woman, nor the spirit of a man."

"What wouldst have of me?" asked Selim, galled by her reproaches.

"To be a man," drily replied Zara.

"To be a man!" echoed Selim. "I do not understand thee."

"I am sure thou dost not—canst not understand me; because if thou wast what thou seemest to be—a man—thou wouldst have long since fulfilled thy vow. *That* thou wouldst have done, instead of skulking and thieving about the Christian encampment; consorting one day with some miserable Greek, whom thou callest Alexander, and then plot-

ting the next with a ruffian mendicant whom thou never namest—and all for what? to carry off a wretched, helpless, unoffending Christian woman like that poor creature, who is, I see, now struggling into a consciousness of her situation. There, run to her—help her—give her a draught of water; I will not; do thou—a slave—woman's work, for a free man's work thou hast not the bravery to do."

Selim's hand grasped his sword; he half drew it from its sheath, when the woman bounded across the floor, and drawing forth her own tiny dagger, flashed its glittering blade before his eyes, as she said, in a bitter, jeering, gibing tone:—

"Thou hast made no vow to slay me, and therefore, perchance, thou wilt do what thou hast not promised; whilst that which has been promised still remains unperformed. To slay me would be to slay a Mahommedan woman. Thou hast not vowed to do this; to slay some prince in the Crusader's army would be to slay a Christian, and *that* the follower of Mahomet will not perform, because it is dangerous. But there may be danger also in attacking me, and therefore I am sure I am safe from thee. Draw but thy sword, woman-stealer! and this dagger shall have its point buried in thy craven heart; come on—I defy thee—coward—slave—vow-breaker—recreant as thou art."

The man's patience was exhausted. The rage her words had provoked burst forth, and rushing upon her, he wrenched the weapon from her hand, and in the struggle cast her on the floor, and his hand was upraised to plunge the dagger into her prostrate form, when suddenly he felt himself impeded by

Gunhilda, who rushing between him and his extended victim, so clung to his knees, with her arms cast around them as she fell before him, that he was unable to move.

“Spare! oh! in mercy—spare her life,” shrieked the terrified Gunhilda.

Selim cast the dagger away from him, and then looking down at Zara, he said:—“Thank this lady for thy life—for had she not interfered, thou wouldst now be amongst the dead.”

“I do thank *her*—not thee,” replied Zara, as she rose from the floor; and then walking over to the spot, where the dagger had fallen, she picked it up, and coolly replacing it in her girdle, she continued her discourse by saying:—“When next I draw this weapon with the intention to kill, I shall hold it with a firmer grasp.” She then turned to Selim, with the words:—“I have long believed thee to be a braggart, and I am now sure of it; I have long suspected thee to be a coward, now I know it. Begone, fellow, and leave us, women, alone. Go—to your fitting associates, a lying Greek, and a canting beggar, and tell them of thy two last great exploits—that thou hast run away with one woman in order that thou mightest rob her; and that thou wast on the point of slaying another woman, because she used a woman’s weapon against thee—her tongue. Go—begone—unfit companion for men with hearts, or women with heads.”

Selim saw there was no chance, for the moment, of calming the ferocious temper of the female who thus spoke to him; and, therefore, without making

a single observation to her or Gunhilda, he quitted the apartment.

The eyes of Zara were fixed upon him as long as remained in the room, and followed him as he walked slowly to the door. The expression in those eyes was unmistakeable: it manifested scorn, contempt, and defiance. As soon as he had disappeared, she walked hastily to the door, slammed it violently to; and then placing a double bolt on it from the inside, she muttered to herself, rather than addressed her words to Gunhilda:—

“Worthless braggart! vain, boasting hypocrite!—always talking of his vow, and his paradise—of his chief on the mountain—and his seventy thousand saffron meadows. And I (!) believed in him, as I believed in—Augh! They are all alike: all men are the same—all selfish—all base. They use their personal strength to tyrannise over us, to make us their slaves; and we deserve it, because we are base enough to submit to them. All are bad; and this base wretch’s only demerit is, that he is amongst the worst and most degraded of his sex. And I—oh! shame and curses upon my want of skill how to hold my weapon, have been disarmed by him, have lain at his feet—and he, the craven, spared my life! No; he did not—would not have done so; it was a woman—this woman saved me from the woman-slayer. Yes, *thou*,” said Zara, addressing herself to Gunhilda, “thou alone didst save my life from the rage of that ruffian. Thy name?”

Gunhilda, appalled by the scene of violence she had witnessed, and terrified alike by the words and demeanour of this strange woman, was unable, when

so suddenly and unexpectedly addressed by her, to give utterance to a single word.

The silence of Gunhilda presented a new object of irritation to the violent woman, who, advancing hurriedly towards her, and looking down upon her, as she lay weak and motionless on the couch, cried in a voice made shrill by rage:—

“Thy name, woman. I say—thy name, instantly.”

“I am,” replied Gunhilda, in a weak and trembling voice, “by birth a princess, one of the Anglo-Danish royal family who lately reigned in England; by marriage I am the wife of Baldwin, Duke of Boulogne, one of the chosen leaders in the army of the Crusaders, and now absent at Edessa, of which place I have heard he has been chosen as king.”

“And knowest thou, that, by the fortunes of war, thou art now *my* slave?” asked Zara.

“I only know this,” meekly replied Gunhilda, “that whatever be the will of God, I am prepared to submit to it. I have taken up the cross to follow Him; and He assumed the form of a slave to redeem mankind. I am happy to be allowed in any way to imitate His example. If I am indeed thy slave, I accept its duties, and will perform them. Command, and I will obey.”

“What! in all things?” said Zara.

“Yea—even in the most menial offices,” replied Gunhilda.

“I know enough of thy creed to be aware that what thou sayest is but a vain, empty boast,” cried Zara, scornfully.

“Try me,” said Gunhilda, in the same gentle voice.

"What is that bright, glittering bauble thou wearest around thy neck?" asked Zara, whilst a lurid fire gleamed in her eyes.

Gunhilda took a brilliant cross of diamonds which hung at her breast, and depended from a rich chain of gold, and kissing it she placed it in the hand of Zara.

"These are very precious stones," said Zara, with a malignant smile.

"They are of great value: the gift was made to me by Duke Baldwin, upon the day I was betrothed to him," said Gunhilda, with a deep sigh.

"Thou hast nothing, then, which thou lovest so much as this," remarked Zara.

"No; no earthly possession is so much prized by me as that," replied Gunhilda.

"Very well; thou hast promised *obedience*—thou art my slave. Here—take this—trample it under thy foot," said Zara, with a triumphant look.

"Not for ten thousand worlds!" cried the pious Gunhilda, shocked at this sacrilegious proposal.

"Oh! ho!" said Zara, now in a triumphant tone, "I told thee, woman, thou wast but a vain boaster: as vain a boaster as Selim. Thou hast said thou art willing to obey me in everything—and yet the first order that, as thy mistress, I give thee, thou refusest obedience to it. Knowest thou not that, as my slave, I can scourge thee—can mutilate thy limbs—can deprive thee of life, for refusing to yield to me that obedience which is my right?"

"And all these things I am prepared to submit to—will thankfully submit to, if they are to be inflicted upon me, for refusing to do that which thou now desirest.

Take this ornament—break it up—destroy the form in which those diamonds are set ; and then, whether individually or collectively, I will, if thou wishest, trample them under foot, or cast them away as if they were so many worthless pebbles ; but as long as they bear their present shape—as long as they are arranged *as a cross*, I can only look upon, and if permitted to touch them, kiss them with reverence.”

“And why this difference between them in one shape, and in another ? They are still diamonds,” observed Zara.

“If you put the most common piece of wood into the same shape which these diamonds now have, I would submit to torture and to death, rather than treat it with the irreverence you suggest,” replied Gunhilda.

“And wherefore ?” asked Zara.

“Because they are,” said Gunhilda, “in the form of a cross, and I cannot look upon a cross without bowing down in reverential recollection of the sufferings and death of my Lord and my God.”

“God !” said Zara, foaming now with passion—“God ! there is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet.”

“There is but one God in three Divine Persons,” in a meek but firm voice said Gunhilda.

The snow white upper teeth of Zara pressed her red under lip with a violent compression, as she tried to keep down the rage which this calm answer, delivered in a meek voice, excited within her. Her struggle with herself seemed to be vain, for her eyes lighted up as if with a fierce demoniacal fire ; and she was on the point of giving vent to her irrepress-

sible rage, when, fortunately for Gunhilda, the sounds of a horse's hoofs were heard on the rough, rocky path outside; and Zara, rushing to the window, exclaimed:—

“Ha! the ruffian, I perceive, is away back to his comrades at Antioch, or the camp. And he has left, without a word of advice, or of counsel, of warning, of suggestion, or of command, this wretched Christian woman alone with me. *Alone with me!!!* Alone with me, knowing well the abhorrence I entertain for everything that bears the name of *Christian*. *Alone with me!* to do with her as I please—to maltreat her if I like—to murder her if I choose; for *here* he well knows no human hand can come to her aid, and no human voice be raised in pity to intercede for her.

“And why has *he* done *this?*” mused Zara. “Why has he taken this woman—this miserable, helpless woman, from the midst of her friends, and delivered her over thus as if she were *a victim to me?*”

“Ah! I see it all now,” exclaimed Zara, clapping her hands in her excitement. “The crime he has not the courage with his own hand to perpetrate, he hopes my vindictive hatred to Christians, and my ungovernable temper will combine to execute.

“Base, unmanly villain that he is, this last act of his serves to show how lost he is to all sense of honour, compassion, generosity, tenderness or feeling! He would make of me—I see it now—an instrument as vile—aye, even still more vile than himself; for he leaves to me this weak, unprotected Christian woman, calculating that I will not only rob, but in consequence of some unheeded word spoken by her, be provoked to deprive her of life.

"Oh! base villain! to despoil and murder her, who, at the risk of her own life, saved mine! and he thinks *I* can do this.

"Holy Prophet! am I, indeed, so utterly, irretrievably fallen, that even a wretch like Selim can think so meanly and so poorly of me as to suppose that I shall, in a moment of fury, slay her who has saved me from death—an ignominious death, too!—death by the hand of a boasting coward like Selim.

"It must not—cannot—shall not be—even though in the effort to restrain myself I should die. I will not accomplish what *he* so much desires. To spite *him*—I will bear all things from this unhappy woman—most hateful to me, even though she has saved my life, because she is *a Christian*.

"Am I not right in thinking," said the petulant and ungovernable Zara, turning fiercely upon Gunhilda, "that thou art a Christian?"

"I am—thank God! a Christian," answered Gunhilda.

"And I," said Zara, "believe in the mission of Mahomet; and therefore am a foe to every Christian: it is my duty at all seasons, to hate the Christians, and wherever and whenever I have the power to persecute them."

"And therefore," answered Gunhilda, "it is my duty to do all in my power to serve you—for our Lord has told us, if we would reign with Him in heaven, that as long as we are in this world we have to do these things, for such are His own blessed words—"Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you."

"Good! good! what dost thou mean by good?" asked Zara—"wouldst pity an enemy if in thy power?"

"As I hope for salvation, I would do so," replied Gunhilda, "and I am bound by the words of our Scriptures so to act; for they tell us: 'If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he thirst, give him to drink.'"

"Words! words! and nothing but words! like those the craven hypocrite Selim uses, when he talks of his vow, and of his paradise of seventy thousand saffron meadows. Words to delude the ignorant, to blind the simple, and to cajole the foolish. Thou talkest so finely, and so generously, now that thou art in my power; but how wouldst thou treat me if I were in thine? the scourge would be for my back—the fetters for my feet—and, perchance, the stake for my body, because I would not eat of filthy pork, nor swill intoxicating wine, nor play the hypocrite—as I have known Christians do—pretending to be what they were not. Ah! I know the Christian dogs well," added Zara in a bitter tone. "They are all the same—pretenders and hypocrites: to be scorned as long as they declare themselves Christians; and only to be feared when they abjure Christianity, and practice the rights of genuine believers in the Holy Prophet."

"Thou canst not regard with stronger scorn than I do," observed Gunhilda, "the base Christian who, for the attainment of any earthly good or gain, has renounced his faith, and become a Mahommedan. I hate and dispise him."

"Good—good," said Zara, a smile for the first

time resting, but not remaining upon her ripe, red lips. "Now thou speakest like a rational woman. Say it again—thou scornest the Christian renegades—thou hast said the words—repeat them—I like to hear strong words uttered by such a gentle, sweet-toned, small, delicate voice."

"I do," continued Gunhilda. "I scorn, loathe, abominate, detest, abhor, execrate them. They are most execrable villains; they are unfit to live. Shame, and reprobation ought to rest upon them here, as eternal perdition is their inevitable doom hereafter."

"Oh! this is excellent," cried the impetuous Zara—"always talk thus of Christians, and thou and I shall be friends;" and so speaking, she for the first time sat herself down during this conversation. The seat she took was on the same couch on which Gunhilda was reposing.

"I spoke not of Christians generally," observed Gunhilda—"I referred to none others than renegade Christians."

"Oh! renegades or not renegades, it is all the same," said Zara, "I see no distinction between them."

"The renegade Christian," replied Gunhilda, "is no longer worthy of the name of Christian. The renegade, for some worldly object, abandons his God; but the Christian, because he loves God, is willing to abandon all things in this life—riches, pleasures, rank, titles, aye—even life itself."

"Words! words! words! and nothing but words! Thou sayest," said Zara, the blood flushing her dark cheek, as she spoke, "that the real Christian loves his enemies. We are foes to the Christians. How

do these real Christians treat our men and women, captured in war? Do they not slay the men—maltreat and make slaves of the women?"

"Listen to me," said Gunhilda, "I am about to answer thy questions, not by professions of philanthropy, nor even by quotations from our Scriptures, for these thou wilt say, are but 'words;' but I will tell thee an anecdote, and the truth of it thou canst ascertain through the wicked man who has lately left me here."

"Woman," said Zara—"be careful in what thou art about to say. I can endure few things patiently; but that which provokes my undying enmity is the attempt to deceive me—to play false with me—to delude me by any well-contrived fiction, or by any false picture. Thou art warned—proceed now, if thou wilt. Thy safety or thy death may depend upon thyself—whether thou narratest to me a fact, or a fable."

"What I am about to tell thee is as true, as that I am now speaking to thee," said Gunhilda.

"I am an attentive listener," said Zara.

"I will not tell thee," said Gunhilda, "what a Christian ought to do; but I shall tell thee what Christians have done, and that, too, in the case where a Turkish woman was fairly made a captive in war."

"Fairly a captive in war!" repeated Zara. "Be cautious in what thou sayest—I have warned thee to be so. What have women to do with war, that they should in fairness or in justice be made to suffer for what they cannot prevent?"

"Thus it happened," replied Gunhilda: "a woman, disguised in male attire, was wounded by our

soldiers, they supposing her to be a man. She was conducted, as a wounded prisoner to the Christian camp. She was there first seen by our chief Christian priest—the Bishop of Puy ; and he, recognizing that the person the soldier supposed to be a man was in reality a female—he, for the purpose of protecting this person—his enemy, too—from the possibility of being exposed to insult, for she was young and very beautiful—commended her to the care of the lady of highest rank in the Christian encampment. By that lady the young Turkish woman was received, was cared for, was nursed, not merely in the lady's tent, but placed in her own bed ; and watched with such medical care and skill, that the wound she had received was so perfectly cured, that a slight scar—which does not in the least degree diminish the young girl's beauty—is the only trace that remains of the injuries she received ; but yet *it will remain*, long as that maiden lives, a memorial that Christians do practise what they profess—that they love their enemies, and do good to those who hate them.”

“ And all this is true ? ” said Zara, doubtingly.

“ As true as that I am speaking to thee,” replied Gunhilda.

“ It is a very pretty, a very interesting—nay, more, it is a very moving story—if it be true. Poor young girl ! how she, with a true Mahomedan hatred of the Christians, must have felt her heart stirred within her when she found herself in the tent of the Christian woman—and so cared for, and so nursed ! and so——But how am I to know all this is true ? Nothing more easy than to invent such a story. Any one can invent a story, and swear to it as a

truth. If all this has occurred, it must have happened to real living persons, and those persons must have names. Thou sayest the Turkish girl was kindly treated by the Christian woman; how knowest thou this?"

"Because I have heard the Turkish girl herself say," replied Gunhilda, "that the Christian woman had watched over her with more than a mother's care and tenderness."

"Indeed!" said Zara, and a malicious smile gathered around her mouth as she said: "Of course thou canst tell me the name of this good Christian woman."

"I can," meekly replied Gunhilda, as she cast her eyes on the ground, "although, in other circumstances, I would be unwilling to mention it. The name of this Christian woman is Gunhilda, wife to Baldwin, Duke of Boulogne."

"Thyself!" said Zara, still doubtingly.

"Myself," answered Gunhilda.

"Good," continued Zara, "very good—a very good story of very good Christians!—of the good Bishop of Puy and the good Princess Gunhilda. But we have not yet heard the name of the young Turkish girl. Of course it cannot be unknown to thee; and thou canst not be unwilling to tell it. The name—the name—the name, I say, of the Turkish girl; her name at once, woman. No hesitation—no stammering, now. What was the name of the Turkish girl?"

"Amine," replied Gunhilda.

"*Amine!*" repeated Zara, and she bounded from the couch on which she had been reposing, as if an

arrow had struck her to the heart; "*Amine!*" she repeated, and her lip trembled, and the pallor of death seemed to come over her dark cheek; "*Amine!*" did I hear aright? Didst thou say *Amine?*"

"I said Amine," replied Gunhilda; "the young Turkish girl told me her name was Amine."

"And dost thou know any more of her, than that her name is Amine?" asked Zara, now deeply moved by the words of Gunhilda.

"I do," answered Gunhilda; "she told me that her father was a Christian renegade, and her mother a Turkish woman, and——"

"Her age, her age," exclaimed Zara.

"I should suppose between seventeen and eighteen years; but she also told me her father's name was Feroz; her mother's name I do not recollect her ever mentioning."

"She was right—she was right—she was right; it is an accursed name, and should never be mentioned by the young and innocent Amine. Holy Prophet!" exclaimed the impetuous Zara, "what awful destiny is impending over me? Are my sins of temper—my ungovernable passions—my criminal, pitiless waywardness, at last to burst forth in some tremendous punishment? Oh! Prophet, look upon me, and upon this woman—*this Christian!* Behold how thy follower is abased in her presence. The same woman—the same Christian—has saved the life of Amine; and the same, the very same Christian woman has saved the life of Amine's wicked—Oh! marvellous destiny!—oh! most miraculous woman! I have dared to call thee my slave; but behold! I am thy slave Here I cast myself at thy feet—I kiss thy feet."

am not worthy to kiss that life-giving, life-preserving hand; and, as the hapless woman thus spoke, she cast herself on the floor; and as she uttered the words, she kissed the feet of Gunhilda.

This sudden change in the manner of the violent woman alarmed Gunhilda. This impetuous outburst of humility was as terrifying as the ferocious, overbearing manner which had previously marked the demeanour of Zara. Gunhilda tried to speak, but the shock she had received, combined with the fatigues of the past night, and the awful events of the day, overwhelmed her, and she fell back on the couch apparently lifeless.

"Wretch! accursed wretch that I am! I have terrified her to death," said the now miserable Zara, as she lavished all her care upon one that a few minutes before had been an object of abhorrence to her. At length her tenderness was rewarded by finding Gunhilda fast returning to consciousness, and Zara, with all the tact of a woman, perceived that the sure way of not afflicting her, whom she henceforth determined to regard as her guest, was by suppressing her own violent emotions, by repressing them, and, if she could, preventing their open manifestation.

"Lady," said she, here is food for you; here, too, is wine; I have found it in the caves of this old ruined castle, and although I taste it not myself, I am aware that Christians who partake of it declare it to be very refreshing, and therefore I pray you imbibe it, for you require strength, and this, I believe, will impart it to you. There, that is well; I know what you must wish for most is to be released from this captivity, and restored to your friends; be

sure I shall aid you to the utmost of my power. *Of my power!* Curses on them," exclaimed Zara, in a sudden outburst of passion, "what power has a Mahomedan woman? We are the slaves of men; we dare not stir abroad without their permission; we are as degraded as if we were animals without mind, or heart, or feeling. My power, forsooth! Alas! lady, I have none; but I have a woman's wit, and with its aid alone I think I can overmatch the vain, boasting, craven Selim. But hist! hist! I heard the sound as of a horse riding at full speed, and there is, too, in the air those confused, whispering, indistinct noises which precede the advance, by miles, of a large body of men marching in military array together. Pardon me, lady, for leaving you thus alone, I do it for your good, as I am now as watchful for your safety as I was before indifferent to it." With these words Zara left the room.

Gunhilda rose from the couch on which she had been resting, and taking her diamond cross in her hand, she knelt down and prayed, as the pious pray when they have escaped from imminent peril.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONTRAST.

"WELL," said Zara, as she confronted Selim, when he was on the point of guiding his panting horse within the crumbling walls of the ruined fortification, "why didst leave so abruptly, and why return so soon?"

"I left," said the dogged, sullen-looking Selim, "because of thy temper, and I have returned, because intelligence has reached me, through the mendicant, that the individual doomed by me to destruction—Swein, Prince of Denmark, with his betrothed bride, the fair Florine, are now fast advancing in this direction, towards Antioch, and there is the probability they may even pass by this place, perhaps, by some lucky chance, fix upon this fortress as their head-quarters for the night. If they should, none know better than thee, for I have shown thee all its secret subterranean passages, how very easy it would be for me to inflict death upon one or both Swein and Florine if I choose, and at the same time secure my own safe escape."

"Safety, and escape!" cried Zara, with affected surprise; "are these fitting words in the mouth of a devout Ismaëlian? Why, that which I supposed thou was ever most anxious to attain was to see thy knife in the destined victim's heart; and then to lose thy own existence, so that thou mightest at once ascend to Paradise and disport thyself in one of the seventy thousand saffron meadows or topaz galleries, expressly and exclusively reserved for the enjoyment of a courageous and resolute Fedai."

"And I say nought now to the contrary," still doggedly answered Selim. "My vow is one thing; the fact that this place affords great facilities for a murderer to escape is undeniable. There is no inconsistency and no shrinking on my part, when I declare, that come life, come death, I *will* execute my vow when I can, where I can, and how I can, and with this intention I have now returned. But where is the woman I conveyed here? Not dead, I hope.

"Why suppose that the woman thou left living should be dead?" asked Zara.

"Because no man nor woman either is safe in life or limb in thy society for half an hour. Thy temper is like the burning blast in the desert, it rises up no one knows why or whereupon, and scorches, as it rushes along, everything, animate or inanimate, that it touches in its devastating career."

"Thou speakest the truth, Selim," said Zara, "although truth from thy lips sounds like falsehood. And so thou left the Christian woman in the hope that my passionate temper, combined with hatred of Christianity, might lead me to slay her. What harm had this woman done to thee or thine that thou shouldst wish her dead?"

"I had no wish or thought of the kind. So little did I desire her death, that I did not contemplate leaving her with thee alone until thy bitter words drove me away. I desire her to live, because she is a woman of the highest rank, and my hope is to receive, for her safe return, an enormous ransom."

"And was this thy own idea, or was it suggested to thee by another, to capture a woman in order that thou mightest sell her back to liberty?" asked Zara.

"It was not my idea. I had no such plan in my head when I went forth with Baghi Sian and the Greek to capture a beautiful young Turkish female."

"And knowest thou the name of that young female, and in what relation she stood to the Christian woman?" asked Zara, suppressing, as well as she could, every appearance of emotion.

"I know nothing at all on the subject, but that I

found the two women together, and Baghi Sian being unhorsed, I ran away with one woman and the Greek with the other; and I conceived I had the better of the two, for the one I took had jewels upon her, and the Greek told me to keep her safe and I would be sure to get a good ransom for her."

"And dost know why the Greek ran away with the young girl?" asked Zara.

"Oh! yes, it was because Baghi Sian desired to have a young wife. I suppose she is now safely immured in Antioch," replied Selim, wondering at the calm interest with which Zara listened to what he regarded as a very commonplace incident. His admiration was destined to be of very brief duration.

"Oh! villain! villain!" she exclaimed, "and therefore fitting associate for villains, and apt tool for miscreants—canst thou thus speak coolly and dispassionately to a woman—to one that thou knowest has been a mother—canst speak to her, as if it were a harmless freak? This outrageous ruffianism towards two unoffending women—the one a Mahomedan, the other a Christian? Holy Prophet! these are the deeds of *thy* followers! How can I tell, base wretch, but that her whom thou hast aided in thus bearing away to an old and wretched miscreant, like Baghi Sian, may not be my own child—my poor Amine——?"

"Ah! now I think of it," said Selim, "I believe this girl's name was *Amine*."

"Alas! alas!" cried Zara, her rage being extinguished in her horror and grief.

"But then," said Selim, endeavouring to soothe her, "there are, you know, a hundred thousand

Amines; and your daughter Amine was only five years of age, and this girl, I am sure, was seventeen, and therefore could not be your daughter——”

“And therefore may—I am almost sure *is* my daughter,” said Zara. “Selim, thou knowest me well. There was a time when I thought differently of thee than I do now. But in one thing I have never changed—my hatred to falsehood. A false husband—false to his own God, and false to mine, made me abandon home, son, and daughter, sooner than breathe the same air with a perjured renegade. I have committed great crimes—but I am still a woman and *a mother*. True, I have abandoned my duties; but the instincts of a mother for her own child are still strong in my heart: and to save that child I am willing to sacrifice not merely myself, but the whole world beside. Now, mark what I say to thee, for it is as true as every word written in the Holy Koran. Repair the wrong thou hast done—restore to me my child uninjured, and I shall be thy slave—thy abject, meek, humble, uncomplaining slave. Observe, I promise it, and I will do it. Back, back, back, then, to Antioch—seek out Amine—rescue her—bring her here—let me look on her, though she shall never know who I am. Oh! do this for me, Selim, and I will kneel down and bless thee. But refuse to do what I ask, neglect to do it, or pretend to do it and then leave it unperformed—then, Selim, as sure as thou art a living man, I will slay thee. That, too, I promise; and by the Prophet I *will* do it. Now, take thy choice; have me as a help-mate, even though it be in wickedness, or thy sworn mortal foe. Restore to me Amine, or let her become

the slave of Baghi Sian. Choose thy fate: it is in thy own hands. Back, back then, I say, to Antioch—at once, if thou wouldst save Amine.”

“But my vow,—the Danish Prince,” said Selim, confounded by the violence and energy of Zara.

“I tell thee thou shalt never live to perform thy vow, if thou wilt not do what I command thee,” replied Zara. “Thou hast postponed for thine own ease the fulfilment of thy vow until now; postpone it a little longer for my satisfaction. The life of another is at all times at thy command, if thou art prepared to lose thine own.”

“But the princess—the ransom,” stammered forth Selim.

“The princess! the ransom!” repeated Zara, with a bitter, sneering tone. “Oh! this accursed thirst for gold; what signify fifty princesses, and fifty hundred ransoms, compared with the innocence of *my* child? The princess has been as a mother to Amine; the princess has been her best friend; and *thou* her worst enemy. The princess, ransom or no ransom, shall be, I swear it, returned safe to her friends. But I will not oppose thy obtaining a ransom for her if thou canst; but ransom or no ransom—I repeat it—she shall remain unharmed. This, I tell thee plainly; but in order that thou mayest not fear that advantage shall be taken of thy absence, to carry out my resolution as regards her, I tell thee, that *here* she shall remain until thou hast returned. This, too, I promise, and I will do it. If I am alive she shall be here and (as she is now) in thy power, when thou hast come back, whether it be with Amine or without her. Away, then, away! Away! quickly to go—speedily and happily to return.”

"I go," replied Selim, "because I know thou hast ever been faithful to thy word. Observe—the princess shall be here when I return."

"Aye, and *I* too shall be here," said Zara, as she saw Selim again mounting his horse, and riding off—"and so shall this dagger; and if my child has been lost through thy baseness, this same dagger, which for thy sake I will now imbue with a deadly poison, shall be also here, and in thy base heart."

So thinking, rather than speaking aloud, Zara returned to the room in which she had left Gunhilda, and found her captive buried in profound repose.

Zara stopped to look at the sleeping lady; and whilst contemplating her, was herself, not less than the object of her contemplation, a picture. Upon the couch, stretched at full length, lying sideways, with her back to the light, and her face directly fronting Zara, lay Gunhilda, in sleep—as calm, as deep, as gentle, and as profound, as that of an infant. Her fingers were touching each other as she lay, as if the clasp of devotion had been released by slumber, and as if her last thought and her last word had been a pious aspiration. Her fragile, weakly form, her dazzling white, almost transparent skin, indicated the existence of infirmity of constitution; and the pink that concentrated like a fallen rose-leaf upon both cheeks showed that consumption had set its seal upon her; the smooth forehead, the calm brow, the gentle opening mouth, that even in sleep was almost a smile, afforded the proof that she who thus lay in repose had passed through life with no evil passion stirring at her heart, and no wicked wishes breaking in upon her soul. It was the sleep of a Christian,

whose last word was an invocation, and whose first wakening thought would be a prayer.

And so lay Gunhilda in sleep !

Zara stood erect as she looked upon her. *There* was the fair beauty of the west in its decline—and *here* a beauty of the east in its rapid decay—bearing with it all the emblems of the terrible passions with which it had permitted itself to be consumed. There was the fire of anger in the eye—of scorn upon the scowling brows—of hatred and revenge in the compressed lip—and, although there was the beauty of form still in all these, their combined expression served to render their possessor an object of awe or of fear, but not of love, of tenderness, or of reverence.

The blinding passion of self-love could not disguise from Zara the contrast between herself and Gunhilda ; the calmness of innocence in the one—the turmoil of sin in the other ; and as she looked long and earnestly upon Gunhilda, and then began to think of herself, the suggestion at length arose to her mind, *what* could be *the reason* of this contrast between them ? She believed that she possessed within herself all those instincts which make women most admirable—devotion—tenderness—generosity—a love for what is good—a contempt for what is mean, base, or evil. She had, she was sure, in her own heart, all those qualifications which Gunhilda exhibited in her conduct ; and yet there lay one, who, if calamity befell her, or death overtook her, would find hundreds to sympathise with her, or to bewail her loss ; and there stood she—a wife, husbandless—a mother, childless—with none to care for her ; and if she died that moment, not one to weep

for her—the handmaid of a wretch, who was in intention an assassin, and in every day life a villain, who lived on plunder and associated with vagabonds. The present rank of the sleeper was equal, if not superior to that which she had inherited—the present condition of her who was awake was inferior to that in which she had been born, whilst her own life—her conscience told her—had degraded her. Placed both before the world, the one would be admired, whilst the other would be loathed and despised. *Why was this?* Was it—and Zara asked herself the question—was it because the one had been reared a Christian, and the other a Mahommedan?

The question puzzled her. Her own ignorance bewildered her—and the prejudices with which she had been educated deluded her. *This* she knew—*this* she was certain of: that the duty which she as a *Mahommedan* had neglected—Gunhilda, a stranger, and as a *Christian*, had performed—and that too, with respect to one who was her own child—and that child—a *young and tender female!*

And as this thought came to her mind, gratitude to Gunhilda made Zara forget her own faults—and the bitterness that was in her heart was melted into tenderness and veneration for her who had so befriended her child; and at last she burst into tears, as she thought her thanks to the sleeper, whom she would not disturb by their expression.

And so lay Gunhilda in sleep, and so gazed Zara upon her; and as she gazed, so thought and so felt Zara. The sleep of the one continued; but the contemplation of the other was broken by the tramp of many horses, and the voices of many men.

Zara looked out—and she beheld on the opposite side of the bank—directly in front of the ruined fortification in which she was—on the wide plain, from which it was alone separated by the deep ravine, large bodies of horsemen. All were in military array—all wore helmets, coats of mail, breast-plates, back-pieces, and armour for the thighs, so brightly polished that they seemed, like their long oval shields, to be composed of molten silver. All were mounted on strong black horses with long manes and tails, and as they pranced along, their neighing came with an inspiring sound across the deep ravine. Zara perceived that these men marched as if they were in a hostile country; that soldiers by two and three went scouring along in front, and on the outskirts of the main body, which held in close order together, and could not amount to less than fifteen hundred men. Behind this main body she perceived there was uplifted a large black banner, on which there was painted or worked a white cross; and behind this banner of the cross, there rode one hundred horsemen, all bearing two-edged, heavy-headed battle-axes; and in the centre of these she noticed there were two persons—a male and female—both manifestly of exalted rank. As she looked—she could perceive an order was given from the midst of the guard of battle-axe bearers; for instantly, whatever were the words, she heard them shouted on all sides, and then there burst forth for a moment a clangour of trumpets, that ceased almost as soon as it had begun; and the whole army that had been in motion, at the same moment halted.

The group of the battle-axe bearers opened, and

out from amongst them rode the male and female side by side, and both advanced to the very edge of the ravine, as if they desired from that spot to look at the ruined fortification, out of which Zara was then contemplating them.

Zara could not restrain the expression of wonder and of admiration at the marvellous beauty of the strange lady she now looked upon. She saw before her, in the bloom of youthful grace and loveliness, a maiden of brilliant fairness, whose flaxen hair, at front confined by a light silver helmet with long flowing black plumes, descended in silken ringlets along her shoulders; whose exquisitely formed person was enclosed to the waist in silver-ringed armour, so delicately and so closely worked that it seemed to be one mass of diamonds, and from this sprang forth what appeared a long wide-skirted flowing robe, of what seemed to be snow white satin, which nearly covered the whole body of the horse on which she rode. On the back of this captivating horsewoman was a silver quiver, in one hand an arrow, and in the other the thin silver rein with which she guided her steed. The maiden looked like an Amazon; and the manner in which she kept in check the proud animal on which she rode, proved that she was accomplished in all the exercises of the field. Zara remarked that on the front of her silver armour there was a black cross, which, as it glistened with every movement of the rider, she supposed must be composed of precious stones.

By the side of the lovely horsewoman rode a fair-haired youth, with golden helmet and snow white plumes: his armour was composed of ringed mail, and apparently gold, as was his shield, on which was

painted a white cross surmounting a crowned eagle. His steed was white, and on his breast was a large glittering diamond cross.

The young knight, on whose cheek was still the blush of youthful, generous manhood, seemed, as he rode by the side of the edge of the ravine, to address a few words to the maiden, to which she appeared at once to give assent. The young knight then turned round, gave a command to his followers in a loud voice, and in a moment afterwards the whole array of horsemen, as well as the knight and maiden, dismounted. The horses of the knight and maiden were led away, and then they knelt down a few paces apart from each other, and as they did, the dismounted horsemen, still holding their horses tight by the rein, stood by the side of each, and from all assembled there burst forth in solemn words, and in slow cadence, the melody of a hymn.

Up to that moment Gunhilda had been sleeping; but the instant the music of the hymn, entoned by more than two thousand voices, reached her ears, she started up, and, without once looking around her, fell upon her knees and joined, with her own sweet, delicious voice, in the distant song. As she did so, she perceived that Zara was still standing, and turning to her said, in a voice so supplicating and so earnest that it was impossible to resist her request:—

“For God’s sake, as you hope for salvation, kneel!—oh! kneel down, and repeat the words after me; it is the Bishop of Puy’s hymn.”

And Zara did as she was asked; and from both sides of the ravine—from knight, and maiden, and armed soldier—from Christian captive and unbelieving Ma-

hommedan—these words arose to heaven in solemn chant !

“ Hail ! holy Queen !

“ Mother of Mercy !

“ Our life, our sweetness, and our hope !

“ To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.

“ To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping, from this valley of tears.

“ Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us.

“ And after this, our exile, ended, show to us the blessed fruit of thy womb, JESUS !”



CHAPTER XIII.

FLORINE.

THE solemn singing of the holy hymn had ceased. The last echoes of the words, repeated by two thousand voices, had died away, and then—but not till then—Gunhilda rose from her knees, and looked, across the deep ravine to the wide plain opposite ; and as she did so, she clapped her hands with delight, and exclaimed :—

“ Thanks ! O Blessed Virgin ! thanks, for this great favour which thy intercession has obtained for me ;—for again, oh ! yes, again—I behold in this life, and in all her wonted loveliness, my dear cousin, the fair and gentle, the beautiful and the pious Florine.”

“ Is it possible,” asked Zara, “ that the beauteous

creature yonder, who looks more like a Houri descended from paradise than a mortal woman, is a kinswoman of thine?"

"She is my cousin," replied Gunhilda. "Oh! the joy of again looking at her, though she knows not I am so near to her. Oh! the still greater joy, if it were possible, to be close to her—to breathe the same air that she does—to hear her voice—to listen to its sweet accents—to be edified by her piety—to stand by the side of one on this earth, whose whole life proves she is destined to be a glorified saint in heaven. But, alas! I am a captive, and from my prison window I can but look afar upon a happiness in which others may participate, but from which I am debarred."

Zara mused for some time when she had heard these words. She looked across the ravine, then up and down its steep sides—then seemed to calculate how long a time it would take to descend and ascend them; and then she turned round and fixed her eyes upon Gunhilda, whose whole being seemed to be absorbed in contemplation of the fair Florine; and she saw that as the captive gazed at and watched every movement of the enchanting Amazon, her lips moved, now with an ejaculation either of admiration, of love, or of some brief prayer expressive of the thankful devotion that filled her heart, and agitated her whole being. And as Zara watched the demeanour of her captive, the thought of her own child arose to her mind, and she remembered that she who so longed to see her cousin was the same generous woman who had nursed that child in sickness, and watched it into convalescence; and then she resolved, if the object could be accomplished, without violating her own promise to Selīm, to gratify the wishes of Gunhilda.

"Lady," said Zara, "I am anxious to render unto you all the service that is in my power; but my ability is very limited, for I am a Mahommedan woman, and I am bound by a solemn promise to retain you here, until the man by whom you were captured shall return. Such is my promise, and at the sacrifice of my own life, and, if need be, *even of yours*, I will perform it; for though others have been, and may still be, faithless to me, I never will be faithless to them. A captive you are, and a captive you must remain until *he* returns. He will then seek to make a bargain with you—a base bargain to be sure—to sell back to you your own liberty, of which you have been unjustly deprived. I know not what may be his terms, nor whether you shall or can accede to them; but this I do know, that ransom or no ransom, I will then—if this poor head and these weak hands can effect it—at the peril, nay, at the loss of my own life, have you restored to your liberty; and this I will do in gratitude for your kindness to the poor, wounded, friendless, motherless Amine."

And as the stern, impulsive Zara spoke these words she burst into tears. Gunhilda uttered not a syllable, but, clasping her arms around Zara's neck, kissed her on both cheeks.

"Woe is me!" said Zara; "your stainless hands and your pure lips should not come into contact with the sinful degraded, despised Zara. But let me not think of myself, but of *you*. I repeat, I wish to do all I can to serve you, and yet not violate my promise to Selim; for that must be preserved, though at the sacrifice of the lives of us both. What, then, is

to be done? You wish to approach to your kinswoman, Florine—to hear her voice—perchance to speak with her. And here is the danger; for if she discovers you are a captive, she will not, supported by the armed force yonder, permit you to return to your captivity; so that, if I should aid in your seeing her, I might so aid in your escape, and thus be wilfully a breaker of my own solemn promise. Violate it in any way I will not, and yet my desire is to oblige you.”

“Oh! let me but go near to her,” said Gunhilda—“and I will not ask to speak with her. Grant me but that happiness, and whatever condition you impose upon me I will perform; remember I am a Christian, and therefore——”

“Because *you* are a Christian *I* cannot rely upon you. Remember woman,” and here Zara’s innate hatred to the Christians made her for a moment forget not only her gratitude, but her respect for Gunhilda. “Remember thou art not the first Christian I have known—and that the one person I knew the most intimately was base, false and perjured—a vile renegade—a wretch who trampled upon oaths, and who only made a promise in order that he might convert it into an instrument, whereby he could injure the dupes who placed confidence in him. But pardon—oh! pardon—this outbreak of a violent temper—one who has acted as thou hast done to a helpless stranger, cannot be like the vile Christian man to whom I refer—the violator of a promise once given. Promise me, then, not to speak to Florine—nor to do aught else that can lead to thy re-capture, and I will believe thee for thy own sake, and forget thou art—a Christian.”

“This world,” said Gunhila, “could afford to me no pleasure equal to that of seeing, speaking with, and again embracing the good and pious Florine; but even that, the greatest of earthly blessings, I would willingly forego, if I could obtain in exchange for it that which would be to me the far more precious blessing of inducing you to look at Christianity as it really is, and not as it has been described to you, or such as you wrongfully suppose it to be. You are a woman: you feel within yourself all the noble aspirations which entitle you to claim in all things, except in mere brutal bodily strength, an equality with man. Does the religion that you profess so treat you, so regard you, so respect you? You yourself have more than once referred to the degradation of your position—as a woman—as the handmaid, the bond-woman—nay the very slave of man. And as *you* are treated, so are all Mahommedan women treated. And *such* was the condition of women in all parts of the world, until our Lord and our God descended upon earth, and taught mankind to venerate women, in the person of His own Mother. To whom, then—and ever since then, of all created beings—is the highest honour and the greatest reverence paid? *Not to a man—but to a woman!* The very hymn you have heard recited is a hymn composed in honour of a woman, who, it is the belief of the Christians, sits on the most exalted throne in heaven—next to the Godhead Himself. Her and her intercession, her prayers to God, are sought after by all mankind—by kings, and Pope, and bishops, and priests—and the most glorious of saints are deemed to be those who, when living, most closely imitated

her virtues—her spotless purity—her marvellous humility—her boundless charity. Christianity first elevated woman to an equality with man—opened up to her all the treasures of heaven—taught man to love, to respect, and to cherish her, not as a bond-woman, nor as a slave, but as *an helpmate*. And this self-same religion, which first inculcated respect for woman as a duty, is now vilified by a woman ! Zara, Zara, I wish to see my cousin—it is the dearest wish of my heart—but I forego it, if you will not accept the promise I tender to you—and if you will not accept that promise upon the only condition I will tender it to you, and that is, *on the faith of a Christian.*”

Zara was not accustomed to contradiction of any kind. Her wilfulness had hitherto met with no check, and the violence of her temper had overmastered every opposition that had been offered to her, but here contradiction and opposition presented themselves in a form she had never before encountered ; for both came from a weakly woman, unstirred by any passion, and unmoved by the slightest particle of selfish feeling. Nought that she could do, and nought that she might say, would be able to overawe, or shake, or turn aside the firm, but meek being, who now told her she was wrong, and who refused to accept a favour, except upon the very condition she had herself declared to be inadmissible. Zara knew not what to say ; but the natural goodness of a woman’s heart showed her how she should act towards one, who was completely in her own power, and who had befriended her child in the hour of need ; and once she saw the manner in which it

would be most becoming in her to act, she frankly and generously followed out the kindly impulse of of her nature.

"Lady," said Zara, "I am content with your words—I accept your faith as a Christian. I will not weary you by recounting my own personal wrongs, which have made the name of a Christian hateful to me. This I know, that you are good, and that you are also a Christian. I will, when I am alone, think over your words: for, believe me, they have made an impression upon me, because they come from one, in whose truthfulness I place confidence. Meanwhile, let us see how I best can conduct you near to Florine, and, at the same time, prevent any accident occurring, that could interfere with the fulfilment of my promise to Selim. It will take us at least two hours to travel and return from the place where we now stand, to the plain on which I observe the followers of your fair kinswoman are about to encamp. You may perceive that the soldiers are already busily engaged in erecting tent-poles in all parts of the field—that already fires are lighted—and that the goodly company we see yonder intend to remain there for the night. The stream that runs along the bottom of the ravine is evidently the inducement for fixing upon the spot they have chosen as an encampment. The ascent on the opposite side is the great difficulty you have, in your delicate state of health, to overcome; and therefore, it is that I calculate it will take us two hours to go there and return. On this side the descent is easy, and the ascent again not difficult, for I can guide you through the subterranean passages, which

underlie the whole of this fortification down to the very bottom of the ravine, and in so doing, we shall cross, through their means over the water on the other side, because in one place the stream is lost in what appears to be a mass of rocks, but is in point of fact, an artificial bridge crossing the water, and was I believe, originally intended as a means whereby this place, if besieged, could always provide itself with an abundant supply of water. Thus far all difficulties are removed ; but then comes another—how are we to approach the camp, and not be, at the same time, exposed to impertinent curiosity, or to gross rudeness on the part of the soldier? You, as a Christian, must know the manner and morals of Christian soldiers. Suppose we approach the camp wearing the mantles, veils, and mufflers of Mohomedan women, who, when they go abroad, only leave the eyes without a covering, so that it is impossible to recognize them. Do you think, if we so approach the Christian camp—appearing to visit it out of motives of curiosity, that we could do so unquestioned and uninsulted?"

"Insulted, I am sure, we should not be : for every soldier opposite is a Crusader, and has imprinted the cross upon his shoulder to remind him it is his duty to raise his sword in honour of God, and in protection of the defenceless ; and therefore, for a Crusader to insult women—two unaided women—would be to violate his vow as a Christian."

"As a Christian !" repeated Zara, with a sneer.

"Yes—as a *Christian* !" firmly repeated Gunhilda—"for if he were not a sincere Christian—determined, at the sacrifice of his life, to perform his duty

towards God, man, and women, he would never have abandoned his home, his family, and his country to come to a distant land, and rescue from degradation the soil consecrated by the life, the miracles, the sufferings and death of the Son of the Virgin Mary. Insulted, I am sure, we shall not be—but questioned we probably will be, by the first outpost of soldiers we meet; and they may either refuse us permission to pass into the camp, or they may send us from the outposts, direct to the presence of the Prince Swein, or the Princess Florine, in order that they may, if they choose interrogate us.”

The plan thus proposed was executed; and (as Gunhilda had anticipated) they were stopped by the first body of mounted horsemen who were patrolling, as sentinels on the outskirts of the camp. They were conducted, under the guidance of a soldier, to the presence of Swein and Florine; so that, in an hour after Gunhilda had quitted the fortification, her anxious wish was fulfilled, and she stood in presence of her beloved relative.

Florine and her betrothed were both seated close to a large fire, and beside them was a table on which there were wine and refreshments. Florine, as well as Swein, had exchanged their helmets for caps of velvet—each adorned with plumes. The black plumes of Florine were worn in honour of Denmark, the country of him who was to be her husband; and a white plume waived in the cap of Swein, in compliment to his destined bride. Both were engaged in earnest conversation, when the guard approached them and said:—

“Two Turkish women wishing to see the encampment.”

"And I," said Florine, "have a great wish to see Turkish women; for up to this time it has not been my good fortune to meet with one. Have I your sanction, Swein, for doing so?"

Swein nodded an assent to the question, put to him with a smile which would have conquered the obstinacy of the most obdurate.

"Ask me," said Zara, "what questions you please."

"And your companion also, I hope," said Florine, "unable to recognize Gunhilda under her disguise, and yet moved, she knew not why by the expression of the eyes that looked upon her.

"No not my companion," replied Zara.

"And wherefore? is she dumb?" asked Florine.

"She is not dumb; but she cannot speak, because she is under a promise not to do so," said Zara.

"Enough," replied Florine, "a promise is a sacred thing, and never under any circumstances to be violated. Heaven forbid! that for the gratification of any idle curiosity on my part, any inducement could tempt your companion to depart from it. But now let me ask you why are you and your companion so closely muffled up?"

"It is the custom of our country. Christian women permit themselves to be looked upon by men. We, on the contrary, are never seen by any but the members of our own family."

"Christian women are free women; but the Mahomedans, I am told," observed Florine, "treat women as if they were always children—to be petted or coerced at the pleasure or caprice of their husbands, fathers and brothers. Is that the truth?"

"It is the truth," drily and angrily replied Zara.

"How near are we to Antioch?" demanded Florine.

"About ten miles," replied Zara.

"Ten miles to Antioch! ten miles from the Christian encampment! Ten miles away from beloved cousin, Gunhilda. Didst hear that, Swein? Oh! to think that there are but ten miles to separate me from Gunhilda, and then to think that these weary, foot-sore horses cannot be animated with my spirit. Oh! if they were, there is not one of them but would forget its weariness, and each wish itself to be a Pegasus, so that wings might be given to it, to convey us with the greater speed to Antioch and Gunhilda. But, look—look—your companion is fainting. Here! here! help her. Swein fill out wine—let me hold her. Alas! alas! her eyes are closing. Wine, Swein, quickly—wine for this poor Turkish woman."

The unexpected mention of her name in such terms of affection by Florine so overmastered the feelings of Gunhilda, that she was on the point of fainting, when the anxious words of the fair speaker reminded her of the peril to which her recognition would expose all present—herself, Zara, Florine, and Swein. By a violent effort she recovered sufficient strength and energy to whisper in the ear of Zara, that she felt she was unable to prolong the interview.

"Permit us to depart," said Zara, "my companion is affected with sudden illness, and we must return to our home."

"Oh! do as you will," said Florine; "I cannot tell you how deeply moved I am by looking at the eyes of your silent companion. They turn upon me

with the same expression of deep, affectionate love which I ever noticed in those of Gunhilda. Do then as you desire. But you talk of home—here—here is my best palfrey, place upon it your companion; and as you may desire it, you can either walk at her side, or a horse shall be placed at your disposal."

"I thank you," said Zara, "generous princess, for your offer; but we cannot accept it. On the road we have to travel horses would not be as sure-footed as ourselves."

"Indeed!" observed Swein, "then where can be your habitation? it must be a strange building, if it is like the road that leads to it, and a man can travel it with greater speed and safety than a horse."

"Prince, it is within your view," replied Zara, "it is *there*, and to reach it we must descend by one side of the ravine and ascend on the other. No horse could travel the path we shall have to tread."

"That ruined fortification the habitation of two women! Is it possible that you can live there alone?" asked Swein.

"I do not live there alone," answered Zara; "the master of the household is now absent; but I expect him to return this evening; and (here her voice faltered) I hope he will not come *alone*."

"And I hope," observed Swein, "you do not expect many of his race to come along with him, because, if so, I shall have to send some of my soldiers to the fortification. An enemy might there post himself; and taking advantage of the position, conceal in the passages beneath its walls his men, and surprise us by a night attack."

"There is no necessity for any such precautions,"

replied Zara; "the only one I expect the master of the household to bring with him is *a female*. As to that fortification, although there are many subterranean passages beneath it, and though it appears formidable when regarded from this side, it is so accessible on the opposite, that during the many months the siege of Antioch has now been going on, neither Turk nor Christian ever placed a soldier within its walls."

"There! my beloved Florine," said Swein, turning to his betrothed, and smiling, "there *you* have the whole history of that strange-looking, old, ruined fortification. That which had, you said, such a strange fascination for you, is in the eyes of others so contemptible that they would not post a soldier in it. Can you explain why it is that you wished us to pitch our tents *here*, in order that you might gratify yourself by looking at that miserable heap of ruins?"

"I can give no explanation," replied Florine, "except this, that either when I was a child, or, in my dreams, I seem to have seen that very castle; and I know not why it is that I conjoin it in my thought with my cousin Gunhilda, either as having at some time seen her in such an old ruined castle, or as dreaming that I saw her there. And so strong is this unaccountable feeling on my mind, that to-day, when I looked upon it for the first time, I felt as if my cousin Gunhilda were gazing at me from its very walls. I know, dearest Swein, this is fancy—nought but a foolish fancy; and yet so strongly did it take possession of my mind, that for a few moments I actually felt as if it were true. Besides, forgive me for troubling you with what are my weak superstitions; but I cannot refrain from mentioning them, now that

I stand looking at those ruined walls opposite. It seems to me that I have known them long, and when I saw them last night in my dream they reappeared to me as familiar; and I fancied that I saw Gunhilda appearing upon them, and her dress was as white as the drifted snow, and covered all over with sparkling diamonds, which somebody whispered to me were *her virtues*; and I fancied she was preparing for the bridal of some one; and as I gazed on her; I thought that you and I were borne by a cloud across that ravine; and as we touched her hand, a choir of celestial music arose, and we all, hand in hand, went ascending up to heaven together. Now, I know very well that all such fancies as these are vain delusions, and we must pay no attention to them; and this last one I certainly would not recount to you, but for that one circumstance which you know, as well as I, to be true: namely—that I never could have seen those walls before, and yet they are, in their aspect, familiar to me; and as I look upon them, I expect to see Gunhilda stand upon their walls, and as she does so, to invite us to partake of the joys she has won by her virtues. But see, this poor Turkish woman is again becoming ill. Pardon, oh! pardon me, for my idle chatting. You shall be, as you wish, either attended to your habitation, or if you so desire it, permitted to go alone.”

“Alone, if you please, and from this spot unattended. We bid you farewell,” said Zara, as she aided the deeply-moved but still greatly-rejoiced Gunhilda in departing from the presence of Florine and Swein.

The two women passed from the presence of the Prince of Denmark and his betrothed, and from

thence through the different sentinels that kept watch on all sides, and they were advancing close to the edge of the ravine, when Zara suddenly stopped, and pulling down her companion beside her on the ground, she put her lips to Gunhilda's ear, and whispered in so low a breath, that her wishes were rather surmised than heard.

"Stir not, for your life, till I return. Breathe not; cover yourself all over with your mantle, its colour is like the ground you lie upon, and will conceal you; stir not until I return to thee. Silence—peace—hush!"

Zara, as she spoke these words, threw the hood of her dark grey mantle over the white veil and turban and then crept on her hands and knees close to the edge of the ravine, and from thence she was able to perceive there were two persons seated on the ground conversing, one apparently young, the other seemingly old. At the moment she looked down upon them, they appeared about to rise, for the younger of the two was manifestly tendering his arm to his companion to help him up, an assistance which the other, with equal rudeness and vigour, declined, for he said:—

"Let thine hand help thyself, I can do without it; the man who has not the strength to avenge his own wrongs, and to maintain his own cause, should either speak of forgiving his foe, or expect to be betrayed by his ally. I will do it, I tell thee; not all the world, nor the world's wealth could purchase for her seven more days of life."

"But one so young so beautiful——" observed the younger man.

"Her grandsire did not spare one more young and more beautiful."

"Slay him and all his followers, and I shall never say you nay ; but she——"

"*She shall die* ; how, when, or where I will determine. Mine eyes have seen her living ; not her days, but her hours are therefore now counted ; I shall see her dead. *Vengeance is mine*——"

Zara could hear no more ; the two men had descended the ravine. The younger of the two appeared to her either to limp or walk with extreme difficulty.

The gloom of evening was fast descending upon the earth, and from the ravine was arising a misty haze, which rendered the forms of those two men so indistinct, that Zara could not recognize them. Their voices she had never heard before, but the import of their words was perfectly intelligible. They plainly referred to Florine, to Florine *alone*, and Florine was the cousin of Gunhilda, of Gunhilda who had been the Guardian of her own child. What, then, was to be done ? How preserve, or rather warn Florine against the danger impending over her, and at the same time not fill the heart of Gunhilda with the mortal agony of apprehension for the safety of one so dear, when she could not render any assistance.

As Zara leant with a beating heart and a throbbing brow, still looking down into the deep ravine, these various thoughts arose to her mind, confounding and perplexing her, as to what was the best course to adopt. At length an expedient, by which both objects might be attained, occurred to her, and she hurried back to Gunhilda and said :—

"I wish to speak again to your cousin, the Princess Florine. I wish to tell her something which it is for her welfare to know. I wish her to believe that she may place confidence in what I say, as much confidence as if it were said to her by you. Have you any ring or token which I may give her, so that she shall know I come for you. I pledge you my word as a woman, it is only for the good of Florine that I require this; if you ask me what it is I desire to say to her, I must refuse to tell you; sufficient it is for you to be assured it is something I heard since I parted from you."

"Your word is enough—I believe you," said Gunhilda. "I am sure your intentions are good when you declare them to be so; but, alas! I have no ring to give, and no token to confide to you but this: if she should doubt that you are authorized to speak for her welfare on my behalf, tell her that I desire to remind her how many 'Hail, Mary's' we mutually promised to say for each other—a promise which none can know of but ourselves; and if she still further seeks to try you, and asks how many, say, 'One every day, but Friday; and on Friday three.'"

"Good, good," replied Zara, "that will do, and now rest there until I return."

Zara hurried away, and was at her request again permitted to speak with the Princess Florine, whom she still found engaged in conversation with the Danish prince.

"Where is your companion?" asked Florine. "I hope not ill, nor requiring aid from us; if so, it shall be instantly rendered to her."

"My companion is well; she is awaiting my return at the edge of the ravine. My object in returning, Princess Florine, was to warn you against the machinations of an enemy."

"An enemy!" said Florine, "I have no enemy but the Turk, and I do not require to be warned against his animosity. Swein and I have travelled thus far to encounter it."

"The enemy that I would warn you against," said Zara, "is not a Turk, it is some one who is your mortal personal foe."

"A personal foe!" exclaimed Florine, "a personal foe! oh! impossible—impossible; I have never yet wronged a human being in thought, much less in word or in deed. Can you tell me who this person is that you suppose to be my mortal foe, for if he were the meanest beggar, I would count it no degradation to do any humiliating act that might serve to remove from his mind the impression that I ever intended to wrong him."

"I know nought of him," replied Zara, "but that he appeared to me to be an old man."

"An old man! my personal foe!" said Florine. "Oh! thanks! thanks! my good woman for saying that word. With whomsoever that old man may be angry, it cannot be with *me*; for age has ever been most venerable in my eyes, and never have I been wanting in respect to it, even when it was coupled with the most debasing servitude, or the most degraded state of slavery. I have nursed the old, tended the old, never refused the request of the old, never lost an opportunity of bestowing every benefit that was within my power upon the old. No old man, therefore, can be a mortal foe of mine."

"The malignity of the wicked is not to be measured by the generosity of the good," remarked Zara, "and I now recollect that this old man said something of your grandsire."

"My grandsire!" observed Florine, "my grandsire is long since gone to the last dread account which awaits us all. True it is, what has been said by Him who never erred, viz., the sins of the father shall descend upon the children, even to the fourth generation; and if Heaven has so willed that I am to be the victim for some sin of my grandsire, then I accept the sacrifice, and pray that my suffering may be the expiation for that sin, whatever it was, and win heaven for the soul now suffering in purgatory, until it be atoned for. I began my march to Jerusalem by a preparation for death. Each day is commenced by a preparation for death, and Swein and I are prepared for death *before* being allowed to see Jerusalem; it is only *when* Jerusalem has been taken, and the holy sacrifice is again offered up on the same spot on which the crucifixion took place, that we have agreed we are to turn our thoughts to a preparation for an earthly marriage. We are seeking death, not wedlock, in coming here. We both calculate on meeting death, and not of escaping from it, and we are endeavouring so to live, that when death does come—this hour, to-day, to-morrow, a year hence—it shall not find us unprepared. Both desire the crown of martyrdom, but each fears not to be worthy of it. If death should reach us, we look for it from the enemies of the cross, and not as emanating from the malice of any private individual: that malice neither I nor he have done anything to

provoke, and therefore it is that I am sure you are mistaken in supposing there is arrayed against me any personal foe."

"I am sure I am not mistaken," replied Zara. "the words I heard could apply to none other than you, and now I say to you, be on your guard, let no stranger approach you."

"Ah!" said Florine, "my custom is to let all approach me, and beyond all others the poor, in order that none may be turned away, on whose behalf I can perform any one act of charity, be it great, or small, or indifferent."

"If the warning I now give to you came from your cousin, Gunhilda, if the request I make to you was uttered by her, would you refuse it?" asked Zara.

"A request from Gunhilda would be to me so much a command, that it would be my duty to obey," replied Florine.

"Then, in the name of Gunhilda, I entreat of you, whilst you are encamped here, to let no stranger come near to you. Be sure that the food placed before you is not tainted with poison ere you touch it. See that your tent be watched by none but guards on whom you can rely; but above all things, if an old man be found lurking about the camp, have him arrested, and retain him a prisoner until Jerusalem is captured. These things," said Zara, "I entreat of you, I command you to do, in the name of Gunhilda."

"And how come you, a Turkish woman, to speak to me in the name of Gunhilda?" asked Florine. "How can I know that you are authorized to speak to me in her name?"

"Because she bid you do this, as surely, she said, as that you have performed your secret compact with her, and in accordance to which compact you have offered up for her, as she has offered up for you, since she last saw you, one *Hail Mary*, every day but Friday, and on Friday *three*."

"Enough," said Florine. "I recognize in your words the voice of Gunhilda; dear Gunhilda! what thou wishest I will do to the utmost of my ability."

Zara hastened back to Gunhilda, aided her in descending and ascending the deep ravine, and then reconducted her to the chamber in which she had been placed as a captive.

Whilst Zara was occupied in lavishing every care upon the weak, exhausted, and now silent Gunhilda, the sound of horses' hoofs were again heard outside her chamber, and Zara, starting up, looked abroad upon the road leading to the fortification.

One look was enough for the unfortunate Zara, for with that look the demon of despair seemed to have seized upon her, and to have banished out of her heart all the good aspirations that had been struggling for a resting-place during the day.

"Alone!" said she, "alone! It is Selim, and he comes back to me without Amine! Fool! knave! wretch! coward! he ventures to come back within the reach of this dagger without the child that he stole from the care of her who is now within my charge. He comes back to the mother to tell her of her child. Oh! no—not to tell of her child, but to tell some false tale which his slow wit has been coining since I last saw him. He has been washing over with his false tongue some worthless piece of copper,

and expects me to take it as gold, and to give him in exchange for it my credence. He comes to deceive me, and he calculates I will not, in return, deceive him. Fool and knave!—but still greater fool than knave—if he supposes that I cannot, if I choose, be more deceitful than himself. Let us see if the woman, unpractised hitherto in dissimulation, cannot, when she chooses be a deceiver, outwit the dull knave whose whole life is a lie. Ha! here he is. How astonished he will be to find himself deprived of the opportunity of telling the false story which his muddled brain has been all day puzzling itself to concoct.”

As she thus mused, Selim advanced towards her, and in his face was depicted the deepest sorrow.

“I am sorry, Selim,” said Zara, in a tone of voice that seemed to be unmoved—it was so calm, and, if Selim had been a man of deep penetration, was, for one of Zara’s temperament, so alarmingly gentle; “I am, indeed,” she continued, “very, very sorry, Selim, that you should have taken all this trouble in going and returning to Antioch, and all, too, about a matter with which I really have nothing to do; for I discovered, in a conversation with the good lady, your prisoner, that this Amine who was taken away from her for Baghi Sian, could not, by any possibility, be my child.”

“Well!” exclaimed Selim, “I am so glad to hear that; for, to tell you the truth——”

“Do not, on my account, or with the hope of obliging me, put yourself to the very great inconvenience of telling the truth,” replied Zara. “I want you to tell me nothing at all about a person in whom I have no interest, and for whom I cannot care. I

have misfortunes enough of my own, without placing upon my back any additional grievance, which of right belongs not to me, but to my neighbour. Therefore, honest Selim, be silent, if you please, or if you do open your mouth, let it be only to swallow the refreshment I lay before you. I owe you much, very much, for all you have done about *that Amine*, and, be sure of it, *I will pay you.*"

And so speaking the neophyte in falsehood and adept in villainy passed within the walls of the fortification, each so busily engaged in trying to deceive the other, that they did not notice how closely they had been watched by a person who had followed Selim from Antioch, and who, now having tracked him to his lair, at once turned his horse, and rode back at full speed to that city.

How Selim came to be so watched, and why so followed to his abode, may appear hereafter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PERVERT AND THE CONVERT.

FEROZ, the renegade, was sitting in the same apartment in which he formerly had an interview with Alexander of Constantinople; but he was not now alone, for, seated upon his knee (as when she had been a child), and his head resting upon her shoulder, was Amine, their hands were clasped together with a firm grasp, as if he had determined that the child he had lost, and so unexpectedly

recovered, should never more pass beyond the circle in which he now held her.

"But one question more," said Feroz, "and then when thou hast answered that, I shall do all that you may ask of me."

"What! ALL?" inquired Amine, and there was a smile upon her lip and in her eyes.

"Aye—all—all—I care not what it is—for I am sure you will not ask me to do aught but what is good," replied Feroz.

"Be sure I shall not," continued Amine; "but now, dearest father—your *one* question—mind it is to be *but one*—and when that is disposed of, remember you are to listen to my requests."

"My one question, my child, is this—where were you concealed from the time that the rencontre with Bohemond saved you from the villainous Greek and his Turkish soldiers, up to the time that you were wounded when swimming in the Orontes?"

"In flying from the Greek," replied Amine, "it was my good fortune to fall in with the retinue of her who is the mother of Corbohan, Sultan of Mossoul—the same prince who is now approaching with an army of four hundred thousand men to aid the Turks in Antioch. I came upon her, her attendants, and soldiers; and with her, I suppose, I should have remained until now, but that hearing his Highness was on the point of fitting out a secret expedition from Araca—where I then was—to the city of Antioch, and that he desired to send secret information to prepare the garrison for the event, I, in gratitude for the kindness shown to me in his mother's court, and then, from a desire

to be restored to you, offered my poor services to execute his wishes; and how I failed, I have already apprised you."

"Thanks, my child, for I now know all that has befallen you since I left you, as I supposed, in a place of perfect safety in El-bir, and *now*—for your requests."

"Oh! I have more than one of great moment to make to you," answered Amine, her trembling accents showing how deeply she was moved; "gratitude to her who saved my life—and, as you shall learn presently, who saved more than mere mortal life, points out to me what is the first thing to be thought of, and the first thing to be done by me—it is to restore to liberty, to her family, and to the Christian encampment, the good, the gracious, and the generous Lady Gunhilda. My belief is she is in Antioch—that she was carried away by the Turks, when they made their cowardly attack on the tents appropriated exclusively to the Christian women."

"Carried into the city of Antioch she most certainly was not," said Feroz; "that I am as sure of as that I now hold you clasped within a fond parent's arm. I knew, my child, of that cowardly attack, and, if I had strength to do so I would have taken part in it."

"*You!*—*my* father!" cried the horror-stricken Amine, and averting her face, so that she might no longer look, as she had been looking, in the eyes of Feroz.

"Listen to me, my child, patiently, and do not judge harshly of me, until you know the motives for

my actions," said Feroz, as he sighed deeply. "The cowardly attack, as you rightly term it, was not planned by me, nor countenanced by me, nor was it within my power to prevent it. I would, then, have taken part in it—I desired to do so, in order that I might, as far as possible, mitigate horrors that were inseparable from such a transaction; but I wished especially to take part in it, because, by so doing, I hoped to baffle the main object for which it was undertaken—and that was to capture *you*."

"*Me!*" cried Amine—"Oh! father! father! what utter madness is this!"

"It is not madness—it is *the truth*," replied Feroz; "as the base Greek seized upon you at El-Bir, supposing you to be a Tyrian merchant's daughter—so did he, having learned through our spies that you were in the Christian encampment——"

"Ah!" said the horror-stricken Amine, "I remember the voice that spoke of *death* and *vengeance*, and that seemed to come from some newly opened grave within the tent of Gunhilda."

"Well," continued Feroz, "as the Greek was then bearing you away from El-Bir, and was intercepted by the chance rencontre with Bohemond, so was it that he seized upon you in the Christian camp, and was bearing you away to Antioch."

"To Antioch!" said Amine—"to *you*."

"No—not to *me*," said Feroz—"not to the city, but to the citadel of Antioch; not to Feroz, the Emir of the Round Towers, but to Baghi Sian, the supreme ruler over Antioch."

"Baghi Sian," cried Amine, utterly surprised—"I never saw him."

“Nor did he ever see you ; but he is a tyrant, a miscreant, and a villain ; and believing all the Greek said about you, he determined to carry you away from your friends, and make you his slave.”

“But I never injured him,” said Amine—“why then thus persecute me?”

“Because he has supreme power in Antioch, and he chooses to exercise that power in the gratification of his cruelty and his wickedness ; and so, to please him the Greek had again seized upon you, and would have carried you away with him to Antioch.”

“Ah ! but the good Prince Bohemond was again my preserver—and again saved me from the Greek, and as I now know from Baghi Sian,” remarked Amine.

“Prince Bohemond !” said Feroz, “has but to demand from me whatever is within my power to give, and he can command all that I can bestow.”

“Remember *this promise*, dearest father,” said Amine, “as it may be necessary for me to recall it to your recollection. But now, how know you that the Lady Gunhilda is not in Antioch, and that she never was brought here?”

“Because my eyes beheld every one that came back to Antioch from the Christian encampment. Unable to sit on horseback, I watched, as a father watches for his child, to see the expedition return from the attack on the camp ; and as surely as I know that *you* were not amongst them, so am I certain that there was not any one bearing the most remote resemblance to the Lady Gunhilda conveyed into Antioch. It is an absolute impossibility that

she could be in any part of Antioch, without my knowledge; unless she had been here the day before the attack was made on the camp—that is, when you are aware that she was there and not in Antioch.”

“Then where can she have been conveyed to, if not to Antioch?” asked Amine.

Feroz had not time to answer this question, ere it was intimated to him by the sound of a cymbal at the bottom of the tower, that a stranger desired an interview with him.

“Here,” exclaimed Feroz, drawing a curtain which covered a recess in which were placed cushions to rest upon—“here—draw close those curtains, and it will be impossible for a stranger to know whether or not there is any one concealed in the room.”

Feroz was thus engaged speaking and so arranging the curtains, as to make all the other recesses in the room have an appearance similar to that in which Amine was resting, when Selim stole into the room, and stood there as silently and as noiselessly as the tiger, when it is about to make a spring upon its victim.

“Well!—thy business—speak!” said Feroz.

“My business!” said Selim, keeping his eye fixed on the recess in which Amine lay. “My business with your Highness is to ascertain from you the fact, as to whether Alexander of Constantinople has returned from the camp incursion to Antioch.”

“He has not,” replied Feroz. “But wherefore apply to me for information respecting him?”

“Because,” replied Selim, “he said you had been made aware of the object of that expedition; and therefore, before venturing into the presence of Baghi

Sian, I wished to be certain how the facts stood—had Alexander returned to Antioch, and had he brought with him the young Turkish maiden? When I last saw him he was riding off in the direction of Antioch, and he then had her safe in his custody.”

“Neither Alexander of Constantinople has returned, nor has any Turkish maiden been brought a prisoner into Antioch,” said Feroz.

“This is strange!—very strange!” observed the really perplexed Selim. “I was sure I would have heard that the maiden was in the power of Baghi Sian, and I wished to tell the Greek of strange things I had heard respecting her. I marvel where she can have hidden herself;” and Selim eyed with suspicion the recess in which she actually lay hidden.

“Unless she had chosen to have come into Antioch of her own free will,” replied Feroz, “she could not now be here—but brought in a prisoner she certainly was not.”

“I am greatly puzzled, and more perplexed about her than I can possibly explain to your Highness,” said Selim; “but I do own to you that I care less about her, than I do to know what has been the fate of Alexander.”

“You must seek that information of his comrades,” said Feroz—“I know nought of him: I never saw him but once, and whether he be living, or was slain in the attack on the camp, is a matter of indifference to me. Farewell.”

“Farewell!—your Highness—farewell!” said Selim as he bowed out of the room, and then as he descended the winding stairs he muttered to himself—“There was certainly a woman in that recess—I marvel who

could it be? not his wife—for he has had no wife this many a year. It is said that he has had a son and a daughter; but no man can tell whether either is dead or living. *Who*, then, can that woman be? She is not an old woman, or else he would not be so careful in concealing her. What, then, could have brought a young woman there—or, if there, why such secrecy to conceal her? Eh!—phew!—what! *could it be Amine?* It is the only place in Antioch in which, if concealed, no one would think of searching for her. Amine concealed in Antioch! What! an attempt is made to carry her off to Antioch—she escapes—and then she runs to Antioch to conceal herself! Oh! absurd! nonsense; how came I to think of such folly? Why if I suggested such an absurdity to Baghi Sian, instead of a purse of gold, he would order me the bastinado. I shall then certainly say nothing about it. But as Amine is lost, why not give to Baghi Sian the hint, that if he searches for her in the house of the Emir Feroz, he may find some maiden as beautiful, and not as difficult to carry away as *Amine*. It is a good idea, and I will act upon it. And now, if possible, to discover what has become of the Greek. What a pity! if any unforeseen accident should occur to prevent the completion of our plot with respect to the old miser, who pretends to be a magician. Now, then, for Baghi Sian.”

And so muttered, and so hurried Selim on his way towards the citadel, expecting to obtain an interview with Baghi Sian.

The moment that Selim had left the room Amine bounded out of the recess, and running over to her

father said—"We are now on the trace of Gunhilda; that is the villain by whom she was borne away at the moment that the Greek seized upon me. I recognized him the moment he entered the room. Set a watch upon him, let him be dogged wherever he goes. Be sure he is not lost sight of by your messenger, until the latter has ascertained from others, or sees with his own eyes, the abode in which that wretch dwells, and the number of the members of his family. Send—dearest father—send after him instantly."

"*It shall* be done," replied Feroz. He quitted the apartment for a few minutes, and then returned to say:—"It is done: I have set one on his track, who will never tire in the pursuit, until he has run the wolf down into the very den from which it originally came."

"And now, my beloved father, said Amine, "to say a few words to you—for they must be very few, as I believe, from the manner and language of that vile man, he suspects me to be here—and here, therefore, I cannot remain."

"Oh! let us speak of nought but yourself, dearest Amine," interrupted Feroz, "for you are the sole happiness left to me in this life."

"*This life!*" replied Amine, "what signifies this life? It is an atom in eternity—a breath gone as quickly as it has been exhaled, and soon lost in the immensity of space. This life!—of what avail are its few years of many sorrows, and of no substance but that small portion of it we give to our God, and to our own soul? This life!—what is it—what should it be in the estimation of a Christian?"

"A Christian," said Feroz. "Is this Amine—my own Amine, that is speaking to me?"

"It is Amine—thine own Amine who is speaking to thee—I *am* A CHRISTIAN—a baptized Christian; and I have vowed to renounce the world, and all its vanities; the devil and all his pomps; the flesh, and all its weaknesses; and I have come to thee—my own father to entreat of thee to think of thine immortal soul, and to make compensation to Christianity for the evil thou hast done, and the scandal thou hast given. On my knees I beseech of thee, as thou lovest me—as thou lovest thine own soul, which will never die—I entreat of thee openly to renounce the errors thou hast embraced, though poverty, though tortures, though death await thee."

"Rise—rise, my child," said Feroz, "and do not kneel to a base and wicked sinner, such as I am. I too, my Amine, have seen the errors of my ways, and I am resolved again to become a Christian."

"Thank God! for that," said Amine, still remaining on her knees, "but before I rise—listen to me—for I have not yet done with my requests, how long is it since you came to that blessed and holy resolution?"

"But a few days," replied Feroz.

"A few days! a few days!" observed Amine. "Oh! those precious few days, that have been irrecoverably lost to you. Oh! the wonderful mercy of an all-loving God. Here is a man who has been wilfully sinning for his whole life. At length the grace of God touches his heart—and yet wilfully he casts from him the grace bestowed; and knowing how he may attain heaven, he yet wilfully lingers on the brink of hell, into which the slightest accident may plunge him for ever. Oh! my father, if you have

resolved to become a Christian, act upon your resolution—become one *now*—let not to-morrow's sun shine upon you—an unbeliever."

"Ah! my sweet, enthusiastic, and angelic Amine," replied Feroz, "you speak with all the zeal of a convert, and the inexperience of a girl. Most desirous am I to be again received within the bosom of the Church; but that which you cannot discern are harsh realities that impede the path of my return; and what you call nothings are, in point of fact, impossibilities."

"Impossibilities in the way of God's grace! impediments in the path of God's mercy! as well say that God is not omnipotent: there is nothing impossible to God."

"But there are to man—impossibilities; and such are those that now enchain me on every side. Here am I, an Emir in Antioch, the Emir of the Round Towers; here is my charge, and I dare not be absent from my post even for an hour. How then am I, with hundreds of men under my command, to leave them—unknown to them—unobserved by them—unpursued by them—abandon my post, and fly to the Christian camp, find shelter within its lines, and there renounce Mahommedanism and become again a Christian? And yet, all these things, Amine, I would do, if it were possible; and because they can not be done, they are—impossibilities."

"Ah! my father," replied Amine, "the selfishness that made you renounce Christianity still clings to you, and seeks to damn you, by creating in your way impossibilities, which you will find all springing out of the same selfishness. In becoming a Mahom-

medan, you only thought of yourself; in renouncing Mahommedanism, and returning to Christianity, your only thought is still of yourself. Has this brave, noble, generous, disinterested thought never occurred to your mind, that when all others are sacrificing rank, title, riches, home, and family, in order that they may do honour to our Lord and our Saviour, you also might, by some sacrifice on your part—small as compared to theirs, but still more important to the cause they have at heart, by your position, and the power it gives you—has it never once occurred to you, that you might aid the cause of Christendom, and help the Christians on their way to Jerusalem?"

"Amine! my dear Amine," said Feroz, "you must speak your thoughts more plainly. I do not understand what you are saying—I cannot guess what it is you wish me to do."

"You are Emir of the Round Towers."

"Well!" said Feroz.

"You are Emir of the Round Towers," replied Amine; "why not permit the Christians to take possession of them, and thus become masters of ——"

"Stop! stop! stop!" exclaimed Feroz; "what! betray the cause I have sworn to maintain—abandon to the enemy the post it is my duty as a soldier to defend to the last drop of my life!"

"You forget, my father," replied Amine, "that to obtain that post you betrayed the cause of God, and you abandoned the post, which you were bound by your baptismal vows as a Christian to maintain. You have yielded up without a struggle your own salvation to the enemy of mankind; and therefore it

is that you speak of the followers of Christ as '*the enemy*,' for so you have named them. Supposing you never had been a Christian—yet which, I ask you, of the two now at deadly strife with each other—the Turks and Christians—which of the two has acted as *your enemy*, and which as *your friend*? Is Baghi Sian, who has twice seized upon your daughter to make of her *his slave*, your friend? Has he so acted—or rather has he not acted as your *enemy*? and if he, led by that villain Selim, should return to this room, and find *me* here, how would *he* act? as *your friend*, or as *your enemy*? Could you, father, even by the sacrifice of your own life, save me from his violence? Ah! no; and yet it is for him—to benefit him, to uphold him, that you hold the Round Towers of Antioch, and will, as you say, with your life defend them against '*the enemy*,' that is, the Christians. And how have '*the enemy*' treated your child? Is it as *your friend*, Baghi Sian, would have done? Ah! no. A prisoner in their hands, they gave me liberty; wounded, they tended me, cared for me, cured me; and the noblest lady amongst them all was my nurse, my mother, and, but for her capture, would, as she had promised, have been my sponsor at the baptismal font. And so acted '*the enemy*' to your child. In the attempt to defend me, I have seen one noble, generous youth—a brave Irish knight—Philip of Brefney—a name ever dear to me—I have seen him strike to the earth *your friend*, Baghi Sian, for presuming to lay a hand upon me. I have seen the same *enemy*, Philip of Brefney, trodden down by a whole troop of horsemen—*your friends* again; and then, when it was the will of God that I

should be a second time rescued from *your friends*, who performed the knightly task of a Christian Crusader? The same good prince, Bohemond of Tarentum, who had before preserved me from degradation and from infamy. But Bohemond of Tarentum is your *enemy*, and Baghi Sian, supreme ruler of Antioch, is your *friend*! And therefore you hesitate between friend and enemy, and whilst you hesitate, Christendom suffers, and you yourself stand in danger of everlasting perdition."

"My child! my child! cried the deeply agitated Feroz, "you forget that I have already disgraced myself by becoming a *renegade*, and you desire to render my name for ever infamous, by making of me a *traitor*."

"Oh! self, self, and again self—it is your besetting sin, father. How this world battles with you, and seeks to make of you its base and despicable instrument! If you can save your soul, what matters it to you what this world may say of you? Will its nicknames ascend to heaven? Shall its slanders be heard amid the song of angels? Do what is right; act as your conscience dictates, and let the word fight its own battles as it lists. It has heroes of its own making, and champions of its own choosing; but their names are not to be found in the calendar of saints. Its great men commit wholesale murders which it calls victories, and records them on lofty pillars, and embodies them in marble statues: its popular men, its prophets and its patriots, pander to prejudices they despise, and foster delusions that they know are as hollow as their own pretensions; but the world and its vanities pass away; the monu-

ments fall into ruins ; the statues moulder into dust ; the demagogue, prophet, or patriot and followers, and the pretexts which won applause, are all alike speedily forgotten ; and the great accounting day comes at last, when all shall be judged, not by the opinions of their fellow men, but by *their own acts*, thoughts, words, and deeds to God, to their neighbours, and to themselves ; and nought will remain but VIRTUE, shining forth glorious and immortal, summoned to ascend to heaven ; and then—all else will disappear as the empty vapour, or be carried down by the weight of sin to the bottomless abyss and burn there for ever and for ever in flames that never shall abate in their rage, their fury, and their intensity. Oh ! my father, you know all this as well, nay, better than I do ; and yet—you, an old man, with the world fast vanishing from your grasp, force me to tell you what is your duty, and you then turn away from me, and your only reply is, ‘The world—the world’—and ‘what the world will say of you,’ and that it will then call you ‘a renegade’—and brand you as ‘a traitor.’ Well, I say, be a renegade—a brave renegade ; be a traitor—a valiant traitor ; be a renegade to those who would rob you of your child ; be a traitor to those who are already traitors to their God. Be true to those who are true to the Cross ; be loyal to those whose fidelity to God has made them Crusaders ; be grateful to him who has been generous and good to you, and bestow on Bohemond, who twice saved your daughter from destruction, the city of Antioch, which your worst enemy, Baghi Sian, now holds.”

Feroz did not at once reply to the appeal thus made

to him. He left his child still kneeling, and paced up and down the room, seeking to collect his thoughts. He stopped—again gazed out on the Christian encampment, and again he beheld, in front of the Bishop of Puy's tent, the golden crucifix covered with the rays of the sun, and glittering as if it were all studded over with diamonds. His eyes filled with tears, and he sobbed rather than spoke the words: "It is the voice of God which speaks to a sinning father by the lips of his converted child. What she says I ought to do, I will do; I leave the rest to Him who is All-merciful as He is All-powerful. Sweet Saviour! look with pity on me a sinner."

Amine heard the words of her father, and as she did so a thrill of joy ran through her entire frame. She could not speak from emotion, and when her father turned round to look upon her, he perceived she had fallen on her side, and lay there as if her soul was wrapped in an ecstasy of prayer.

Alas! for him, he had never seen before, and was, until that moment, unconscious what joys there are, even in this world, communicated from heaven to those who are "pure of heart;" whose minds have never been stained with the suggestions of base passions, and whose virginal frames, when sanctified by the Sacraments, are a contemplation of wonder even to admiring angels. Feroz felt, as he looked upon his child thus reclining before him, that he was not worthy to approach her, and as he so gazed upon her, a holier fear of his sins, and a greater desire to be speedily reconciled to his God, possessed his heart than he had ever before experienced. He saw the means to his conversion within his reach, and the

very project which, but a few moments before, when presented to his mind for the first time, he had rejected with horror, he was now eager to carry into effect. The means of doing so at once suggested itself to his mind.

"Amine!" he said.

"My father—oh! my dear, dear father," replied Amine, kissing his hands, as she arose—"let me thank you for the happiness you have conferred upon me by the sweet words you have now spoken."

"Amine," he continued, his whole heart now set upon the accomplishment of the project she had proposed, "disguised as you are you must at once set forth for the Christian camp; soldiers shall accompany you to the utmost verge of our lines. Beyond them you will have no difficulty to encounter. The moment you reach the encampment, proceed directly to the tent of Prince Bohemond. Tell him I am ready to deliver up the towers under my command to *him*, and to *him only*; that once he holds these towers he can admit the whole Christian army into Antioch; and the only condition I make for this surrender of Antioch is, that the Christian princes will consent to bestow *upon himself* the command of the city, so that he who has acted as *my friend* may replace Baghisian, who has acted as *my enemy*. If this condition be agreed to by the leaders of the Christian army, then the manner and the time when the Christians may be admitted into Antioch can be arranged between Bohemond, or some trusty messenger on behalf of Bohemond—by Philip of Brefney, for instance."

"Alas!" replied Amine, and her eyes filled with tears as she spoke, "poor Philip of Brefney was, I

fear, so deeply injured when fighting in my defence that he cannot move from his couch."

"Well, then, if it be not Philip of Brefney, it must be Bohemond himself," observed Feroz, "for I will speak and deal with no man but one of those who has acted as your champion. At twelve to-night let Bohemond be at the postern gate of the northern tower, and there I shall meet him and speak with him. I will recognize him by his saying the word '*Amine*,' and he will know that he speaks with me by my pronouncing the name, '*Philip of Brefney*.' And now, my child, away, away. I am ready to conduct you to the soldiers who shall take charge of you."

"But Gunhilda," said Amine, as her father was about to conduct her from the room.

"I shall ascertain," replied Feroz, "where the vile wretch hides himself, who has carried her away. According to the report of my messenger, I shall either act myself, or consult with Prince Bohemond to-night, what is the best and surest course to be adopted for her recovery. And now, my child, away, speed to the encampment, and may all the angels of heaven guard and protect you on your way!"

Feroz had despatched his daughter, under the charge of four soldiers, towards the Christian encampment. He had returned to his apartment and was engaged in watching the progress of Amine and her protecting soldiers towards the camp of the Christians, when the noise, caused by the heavy tramp of a large body of men beneath the four towers, attracted his attention, and it at once occurred to his mind that Selim must have given such informa-

tion to Baghi Sian as to induce him to come and examine the apartment in which he was then sitting.

No sooner did this thought present itself to his mind, than Feroz took two of the long pillows which were placed in the recesses, and arranging them in that in which Amine had been concealed, he closed the curtains upon it as upon the others, so that the room should present precisely the same aspect as when Selim had visited it.

So prepared to baffle the information of Selim, the spy, Feroz again turned to look at the departing group, and was rejoiced to perceive that in a few minutes more they would be beyond the chance either of being overtaken by the quickest horsemen, or of being struck by a discharge of stone or arrow from the most powerful balista on the ramparts.

Feroz was rejoicing in this reflection, when the room was entered by Baghi Sian, the Emir Ibrahim, and Selim.

"Emir of the Round Towers, I greet thee," said Baghi Sian, as he advanced towards Feroz. "I grieve to say it, there are ugly rumors rife in the citadel as to thy loyalty. It is remembered there that the illustrious Feroz was not at all times what he now professes to be, and it is suspected that the proximity of a Christian camp to the walls of Antioch may have revived in the mind of our illustrious Emir those religious predilections which his better sense and calmer judgment in manhood had rejected."

"I know of no position so elevated as that slander cannot reach it," replied Feroz, "even the topmost branch of the loftiest cedar of the Lebanon can be defiled by the slime of the snail, which has crept

up to it, from the filthiest mire at its root. I know of no armour so strong as to preserve its wearer from the shafts of calumny. The armour may blunt, but cannot prevent the missile being cast at him."

"The Emir Feroz is, like the Greek Alexander, a poet," observed Ibrahim. "I marvel is there any relationship between the two. They talk in metaphors, and parry a home thrust with a smile."

"A vague accusation can only be encountered by a vague denial," replied Feroz. "When the trumpet is sounded, you mount your war-horse; but you do not put your lance in rest until you have seen your adversary. Has his Highness, Baghi Sian, no other object in honouring me with a visit, than to tell me there are rumours affecting my integrity and impeaching my fealty; and that these rumours find lips to pronounce, and ears to listen to them in the citadel?"

"No, Feroz," said Baghi Sian, "I come not here merely to tell thee there are accusations against thee, but to see whether or not these accusations are sustainable by proofs. Here, for instance, is this man—Selim is his name—a very honest man, according to his own account of himself, and an Ismaëlian to boot; and he tells me that he has reason to know that a young Turkish woman, in whom I am greatly interested——"

"Your Highness is very good," drily remarked Feroz.

"Good! very good! eh!" said Baghi Sian, a little confused by the unexpected compliment. "Very good! no, not so very good as thou supposest; but whether good or otherwise, I am, I can tell thee,

most deeply interested about her ; so interested, that if this man is an instrument to aid in her recovery, I shall open my treasury for him, and I swear by the Koran, he shall bear away with him as much gold as he can carry."

Selim's eyes glistened like those of a snake, as his avaricious soul revelled in the suggestion thus presented to him. Ibrahim noted the expression in Selim's face, and resolved, from that moment, if he could, to baffle him, because in Selim he beheld a new rival for the plunder of the wealth which he desired to retain for himself.

"I am so desirous," said Baghi Sian, "to have the Turkish maiden restored to me, that, to be plain with thee, Feroz, I would, to attain that object, sacrifice my life, aye, and the lives of half the garrison of Antioch. The purport, then, of my visit to thee is to ascertain if there be any truth in the rumours about thee, sustained, as Selim says these rumours can be by the fact, that the maiden I seek for is concealed by thee."

Ibrahim noted with the keen eye of a courtier, whose life-study it is to mark the countenances of others, the manner in which Feroz received this accusation ; and he saw, from the defiant smile of the renegade, that, whether true or not, there were, at least, no proofs within reach to give a semblance of truth to the accusation. He therefore determined to take part with Feroz against Selim, and before Feroz could say one word in reply, he thought it right to interfere.

"This good man, Selim," said Ibrahim, "this honest Ismaëlian is one of those very extraordinary

men who are very desirous to make money, but have an unconquerable aversion to earn it. To use his tongue is no trouble; to employ his hands is rather an inconvenience; and therefore the sagacious Ismaëlian, hearing that our generous master here was earnestly searching after a young Turkish female; and the very honest man having paid you a visit, and having seen, or supposed he had seen concealed in this apartment some young female——”

“He saw no such thing,” said Feroz.

“Well, I thought so from the first,” remarked Ibrahim; “but remember, the very honest man has nothing to do but to try and make money without labouring for it; and, therefore, seeing something *here* which excited his suspicion——”

“There was nothing here to excite his suspicion; the room is as he left it,” observed Feroz.

“And that, too, is very probable,” said Ibrahim; “but remember again, I say, the honest man has nothing to do but to watch and to talk; and if, by accident, his suspicions turned out to be correct, he has in our gracious master a generous benefactor, to bestow upon him an armful of gold; and *that*, with a man who likes money, is worth some risk; and then his Highness has the character of bearing with marvellous patience any trickery that may be practised upon him, provided it appears to arise from zeal in his service.”

“I have not patience to be either duped or bantered, with impunity, I can tell thee, Ibrahim,” said Baghi Sian, now deeply incensed, and prepared to turn his rage against the first who should afford him an opportunity of exercising his cruel disposition.

"Come! sirrah!" he said, glaring fiercely upon Selim, "wherefore hast thou stated that Feroz had the Turkish female concealed in this apartment?"

"Because," replied Selim, "I am sure I saw, if not her, at least some one very like her."

"Where?" cried Ibrahim.

"In *that* recess," said Selim, pointing to the place in which Amine had lain hidden.

Ibrahim advanced to the recess, and, withdrawing the curtains that were before it, he observed the manner in which the pillows were laid, and for many moments felt convinced that there was at least a portion of truth in Selim's statement. This, however, was a view of the case which it was not his interest to present to the brutal Baghi Sian, and therefore he said:—

"Why, this honest Ismaëlian fancies every closed recess must conceal a mystery, and that when careless servants cast by chance a couple of soft pillows together, his lively fancy converts them into the form of a female; and his eagerness to dupe the great Baghi Sian induces him to invent a fable, viz., that the fancied form of a woman must be *that very woman*, and *none other*, of whom our gracious master is in search. It is well for the honest man that Baghi Sian's power is not combined with my disposition, or else I should, in my treatment of such a fellow, afford an example of punishment which would deter others from tampering with my feelings, or unjustly arousing my suspicions against faithful officers like to the Emir Feroz."

"And what wouldst thou do with such a wretch?" asked Baghi Sian, with his angry eyes fixed on the trembling form of Selim.

"I would not kill him," said Ibrahim; "I would merely administer the bastinado to him, and then cut off his ears or his tongue, as a warning to all slanderers for the future."

"I swear by the Prophet," cried Selim, as he dropped upon his knees, "that I saw a woman lying in that very recess, and that her gown was of a dark grey, like to the robe worn by a Christian monk."

"I expected you to have taken that oath before," remarked Ibrahim with a sneer; "the last refuge for a liar is perjury; but what single fact is there to confirm your statement?"

"Ah!" exclaimed Selim, pointing out of one of the *balisteria* in the apartment, through which the plain beneath them was discernible: "Look there—there; see you that person at a distance followed by four soldiers; the colour of the dress that person wears is the same as what I remarked upon the woman here. In a few moments more they will be beyond the reach of any missile. The belista here is charged—well charged with stones and arrows. Have I the permission of your Highness to fire upon them? I am a certain and deadly aim; and if the weapon be of sufficient strength I am positive I shall hit them."

"Fire!" cried Baghi Sian, to whom the lives of others were utterly worthless when compared with the gratification of his own passions.

Ibrahim remarked that Feroz turned deadly pale at the words of Selim; and that when Baghi Sian gave the order for the discharge of the balista, the Emir of the Roud Towers had to lean against the wall for support.

Selim pointed the balista with care, as one feeling that upon the steadiness of his aim depended the preservation of his own existence. "I have them covered," he said "and now to overtake them."

A ringing twang was heard, followed by the shrieking whistle of arrows, and the rush of heavy stones as they filled the air. At the same moment the four soldiers turned towards the fortress, the person with the grey dress was observed to run with speed towards the Christian camp, and then the four unhappy soldiers were seen struggling on the ground, whilst the grey-frocked individual, without once turning to look behind, passed rapidly onward, manifestly untouched by the discharge from the balista.

"Poor fellows!" said Ibrahim, wishing to turn Baghi Sian's attention from the agitation of Feroz, because that agitation would aid in confirming the truth of Selim's story. "Poor fellows! their agony has been but brief. They have been struck down by a knave, who has now sought to help out his false tale, not only by perjury, but by murder. Villain," he said, turning to Selim, "how does the slaughter by thy base hand of four brave men, prove thou hast been telling the truth?"

"If I had struck the grey gown even Feroz would not have the hardihood to deny my statement. It is a pity those men are slain outright, for their testimony would confirm its truth."

"Begone, fellow," said Baghi Sian, "I cannot tell whether thou hast spoken truly or falsely. If I were certain which, thy reward would be either great, or thy punishment extreme. Begone, I say, lest I revoke the pardon I have bestowed on thee."

Selim hurried from the apartment, and as Baghi Sian was about to follow him, he added; "Feroz, be careful what thou dost; although there are no proofs against thee, there are suspicions created in my mind by that man's story. Woe to thee if any circumstance should occur to confirm it."

"Emir of the Round Towers," said Ibrahim, when he found himself quite alone with the renegade, "there WAS a woman in that recess, as that knave truly stated; that woman was *not* Mahomedan, as the knave averred; that woman was a Christian, as I know by this little cross of gold, which I picked up when I withdrew the curtains. Keep it; and remember thou hast been a Christian, and therefore must ever be regarded with suspicion by a true Turk."

"Keep it," said Feroz, when he found himself alone—"aye, I will keep it to the last hour of my life." And as spoke these words he covered the small gold cross with fervent kisses.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONSULTATION OF CRUSADERS.

So engrossed had been the thoughts of Amine with the interview she had had with her father, and the importance of the message she was bearing to Prince Bohemond, that she spoke not one word from the moment she left Antioch; and when she perceived that her guards had quitted her, her only feeling was that she was free to speed as fast as she could

on her way, and in obedience to that impulse had fled in all haste onwards, and by so doing had escaped the deadly discharge of the balista. She knew not, and she heard not, the fatal discharge that had struck down her conductors. All she knew was that she was on her way to the camp, and deemed each moment an hour until she reached its entrenchments. She there encountered Guy of Mascon, at the head of a strong body of infantry, and she requested of him at once to conduct, or permit her to proceed with one of his soldiers, to Prince Bohemond of Tarentum.

"It cannot be done," said Guy of Mascon, "until the penitential procession which has been ordered by the pious Bishop of Puy, for the purpose of purifying the camp from all wickedness, has taken place. When the procession has passed, the path will be free for you—and you can either join in it, or you can proceed in the direction of the bishop's tent and hear Mass, or you can wait until the religious ceremonies of the day are concluded; but until they are over, the Prince of Tarentum can see no one, as he, like our other leaders, is taking part in the procession."

"Then I will wait here," replied Amine, "to see the procession pass. Meanwhile, let me ask how fares one of your companions—an Irish knight—who was wounded in the late affray?" and as Amine asked this question, she observed there was a tremor in her voice which surprised herself.

"Thank heaven!" said Guy, "the recovery of the gallant youth is marvellous—his good helmet and stout haulbergeon saved his life. He is now able to walk, and will, of course, like every man who is not,

as I am, appointed to keep guard and preserve the camp from surprise, be a participator in the holy rites of this day. They will, I am sure, bring down the blessing of heaven upon us all; but hark! I hear the first solemn ringing of the bells, which announce to us that the ceremonies are about to commence."

From all parts of the camp, Amine heard the ringing of bells. She observed that the folds of the Bishop of Puy's tent were rolled completely back, so as to give a view of the entire of the interior, which was fitted up as a church, with a high altar erected in its centre, on which were lighted wax candles; the altar itself was covered with gorgeous purple velvet, on which was embroidered in gold and rubies a large cross. In the rich purple she recognized the colour which Gunhilda had told her the Church had appropriated as an indication of sorrow. Outside the tent, but within view of its interior, whilst they were excluded from its precincts, she remarked about thirty persons, so covered with white hoods and white garments, that neither their faces nor the forms of their persons were recognizable, and these, she was aware, were flagrant sinners, who were there performing their penance, and who, on their knees, begged for the prayers of all who were admitted into the interior of the church.

From the oratory of the bishop, which was behind the altar, she observed a large body of priests come forth, and they were followed by a sub-deacon, deacon, and an assistant priest, with the Bishop of Puy. A master of the ceremonies—a priest—arranged purple cushions at the foot of the altar, on which knelt the Bishop, priest, deacon, and sub-

deacon, whilst the *miserere* was recited in a solemn voice. At its conclusion, the bishop, deacon, and sub-deacon were arrayed in purple vestments—the bishop and the assistant priest having purple copes,

The Bishop of Puy ascended the steps of the altar, and on this occasion performed a duty, which generally is discharged by the assistant priest.

“As a bishop, he wished, he said, “to call the attention of the Crusaders and of all who heard him to the fact, that public processions, with the recitation of prayers, by those participating in such processions, was a very ancient practice in the Church; that in times of great calamities they had ever been resorted to, and ever with beneficial effects; that in times of war, in seasons of pestilence, or moments of peril, and for the purpose of averting those calamities which the sins of mankind were ever bringing down upon the earth, the Church commanded priests and people to take part in what were called *supplications*. Such a supplicatory and penitential procession had been ordered by him, because it had been discovered that wicked persons had found their way into the camp, and had sought to corrupt the morals of the Crusaders; that some who had fallen into the snares of sin, now stood outside the church as public penitents, and he entreated prayers for their sincere and perfect conversion. He exhorted all to join in prayer, and to beg from heaven its mercy upon them; and, he said, he felt assured that if they did this with truly contrite hearts, the wrath of heaven would be turned away from them; that Antioch would be won, and Jerusalem soon delivered from the hands of infidels.”

The bishop descended from the altar, and the procession was commenced. First came a thurifer, bearing a thurible from which issued thick clouds of grateful incense; behind him was the sub-deacon, bearing a large processional cross, and supported by acolytes having large candelabra in their hands, and in these candelabra lighted wax candles. Then followed the deacon, supported in like manner by acolytes, and bearing in his hand a copy of the gospels. To these succeeded hermits and pilgrims with sun-burnt countenances and naked feet, each bearing a staff surmounted by a cross, and each clad in a light-grey cassock, with the symbolical shell attached to his breast. These were followed by the Benedictine monks, each bearing a lighted torch in his hand. These were succeeded by the great body of Crusaders—footmen and knights; the former with heads unhelmeted and feet naked—the latter without their casques, and their lances reversed; and when these had passed by, then came the priests, in amict, alb, cincture, maniple, stole, and chasuble; and then, with uncovered heads, and on foot, the leaders of the Christian army, Duke Godfrey, Robert of Normandy, Bohemond, Tancred, Hugh of France, and other great men who had taken up the cross. To these succeeded the bishop, assistant priest, vested in purple, and followed by the mitre and train-bearers, and assistant acolytes; and by the side of the bishop was an acolyte with a silver vase filled with holy water, and in the bishop's hand an asperges, with which he sprinkled the ground of the encampment as he passed along, so as to purify it from the contamination which sinners had brought upon it.

And thus passed the possession around the camp, and returned to the place from which it had set forth; and all the time, as it went along, penitential psalms were sung, and a devout soldiery responded with heartfelt sorrow to the prayers which the pious priests recited; and then concluded the ceremonies of the day, with the mightiest and most awful of all rites, High Mass—and that High Mass celebrated by a bishop; and then all was over, when the solemn benediction had been bestowed upon the Crusaders by the sanctified Adelmar of Puy-en-Velay.

Amine had but recently become a Christian, and it was with mingled feelings of awe, wonder, delight, and devotion, that she witnessed this penitential procession, and marked the fervour which characterized all who participated in it—from the gallant Godfrey of Bouillon, to the poorest soldier with naked feet who joined in it. She felt her faith burn with a new fervour within her, and she bowed her head to receive the blessings invoked from heaven by the uplifted hands of the good and gentle prelate who had baptized her as a Christian. She arose from her knees, inspired with a boldness beyond her years, when she sought an interview with Prince Bohemond, and disclosed to him the proposal of her father. No sooner had Bohemond learned the nature of her message, than he summoned at once to his tent the leaders of the Christian army.

With the delivery of her father's message, Amine took leave of him who had twice rescued her from dishonour, and then repaired to the tent of the Benedictine, Father Francis, in order that she might consult with him and Philip of Brefney, as to the restoration to liberty of her benefactress—Gunhilda.

The leaders of the Christian army, whom Bohemond had summoned upon this occasion to consult with him, respecting the message of Feroz, were Duke Godfrey of Bouillon, Robert Duke of Flanders, Robert Duke of Normandy, Adelmar Bishop of Puy, and Raymond, Count of Toulouse; and the words that Bohemond addressed to them still remain in the records of history, and as we there find them, we so transcribe them :—

“I see, my dearest brothers and companions in this holy enterprise, that you are filled with great grief and dismay at the intelligence which has just reached the Christian camp, of a new enemy (Corbohan) advancing with an immediate army to attack us, and to relieve the besieged city of Antioch. Placed in the centre of opposing dangers, from the city and the country, you know not which to repel nor which to avoid. Whatever we do, we expose ourselves to a certain danger, and we cannot avoid an impending peril. If we determine to attack the advancing army of Corbohan, as it comes to the relief of Antioch—a plan that has been urged by some—then the moment we do so the siege of Antioch is at an end, and the Antiochians are at perfect liberty to aid the assailing legions of Corbohan in overwhelming us, or if introducing as many of his cohorts into the city as will render it impossible for us ever to capture it. But then is it to be said that a part of our army is to be left here to keep the city in check, whilst the remainder proceed to attack Corbohan? Now, mark the danger to us of following out any such plan. If the whole of our army can with difficulty contend, at present, against the forces in Antioch, how is it

possible that a portion of our army can effect that which the whole can scarcely accomplish? If, when they were dispirited, we could not overcome them, how are we to defeat them when they are elated with the certainty of being supported by an immense army? One of two things it seems to me to be inevitable that they will do—either all the soldiers in Antioch will combine their forces with those of Corbohan, and so be superior to us in every respect—so superior, that it will be impossible for us to resist their combined attack; or that, taking advantage of their superiority, they will throw into Antioch such additional supplies in provisions, soldiers, and the weapons of war, that supposing us, with God's help, to defeat utterly and completely the army of Corbohan, still we should be left without the hope or the chance of taking the city, when so strengthened by the additional aid given to it.

“For these reasons, venerable fathers,” said Bohemond, “it appears to me that the thing beyond all others which ought to be the main subject of consideration and solicitude with us, should be how, or in what possible manner we may be able to obtain possession of Antioch previous to the arrival of the mighty Prince, Corbohan, Sultan of Mossoul; and if you should ask me, how, or in what manner, it may be possible to carry such a project into effect, I am happy to be able to inform you that the plan is not merely feasible, but the project is possible, and within my hands have been placed the means of attaining so desirable and so great a result.

“I have in that city, I find, a person thoroughly well disposed to be my friend—to be faithful to me, in every particular—at least as far as one man can

judge of the feelings of another human being; such is the opinion I entertain of him, and for reasons with which I need not trouble you. This man—this friend of mine—is a man possessed of great sagacity; and he holds under his command three strongly fortified towers; and these he is willing to surrender to me, so as that I make use of them, for whatever purposes I desire, upon certain conditions. Amongst these conditions, which I would insist on your conceding to him, are—a rich pecuniary reward for himself, the allocation of lands in perpetuity for the benefit of himself and his successors, and the enjoyment to him and to them of all those liberties and franchises which we as Christians enjoy in our respective countries. The condition as regards myself, to which you are required to assent, is that the city, having been captured, shall pass into my power, shall be regarded as my own, and be subject to none other than my jurisdiction exclusively. These conditions being assented to, I am, with the aid of him who declares himself to be my friend, prepared to procure the capture of Antioch. If, however, you object to the fulfilment of these conditions I have mentioned—or if any one can suggest a better, surer, or safer plan for capturing Antioch—be it so, I say, in heaven's name: no act of mine shall thwart any such plan, and I yield from this moment any pretensions I may entertain, as to making such a city mine, or claiming now, or hereafter, any sovereignty over it."

A speech delivered by the Bishop of Puy on this occasion had the effect of inducing the leaders of the Crusaders to assent to the conditions proposed by Bohemond. The following were the observations made by Adelmar:—

“Much and greatly, my dear brethern, has the toil now before us harassed us ; much and greatly, and for a long time, would it continue to afflict us, had not the eye of the Lord, in mercy looked upon us. We have constructed machines to destroy this city ; it has stoutly resisted us ; we have endeavoured to undermine its walls, and we have been repulsed ; we have fought, and we have fought well, for in every conflict we have been triumphant ; but then remember the military maxim—the more warriors the more sure a final and complete victory for him who commands them. On one side our enemies can count against us fifteen thousand soldiers, and on another four hundred thousand ; theirs increase, whilst ours diminish. And then, consider how strongly situated is the city we are besieging ; on three sides of it there are impassible fosses, and inexpugnable entrenchments, and on the fourth side, a marsh and a river. As to its walls, the world can show no city so strongly fortified. Within the city itself are ever running springs of water, and it is well supplied with provisions.

“Oh ! Antioch, Antioch ! either thou shouldst never have been, or we never ought to have met thee on our road. The cause of Jerusalem is to be contended for Antioch, for if we leave it uncaptured, then we leave it in the same situation as if we had been signally defeated, the cause in which we are engaged is baffled, and not one ray of hope that we ever may or can succeed is left to us. If we leave Antioch as it is, then, I say, Antioch will not leave us ; it will be with us on our march ; our foe here defeating us will be an enemy in our rear, and the

recollection of the defeat it has inflicted will cling to us and raise up against us new enemies to confront us. The resistance it has given us will inspire others by its example, and afford to them the hope of being able also successfully to resist; whereas, if it be captured, then its downfall will fill others with fear, and deter them from opposing us. Oh! walls of Antioch! would that human hands had never raised you, or that our eyes had never looked upon you, and our ears never heard of you.

“But now, noble Crusaders! let us deliberate upon what is best to be done; let us consider what is for the common good of all. Is it not to propose there should be a reward for valour, and a compensation to him who shall most benefit the commonwealth? Look what Saul did. Look what happened amongst the Hebrews, and how, when a fitting reward was bestowed, there arose for it a David. Many there are to say, and that even openly—why should I toil? why should I vex and torture myself? why should I expose myself to be wounded? why should I alone give my life for Antioch, that others may be benefited? why should I be the first to run into peril, in order that others, who lag behind, may reap the reward of my exertions? Am I to work for others, and others to laugh because of my tears?

“Now is the time to act on these reflections. I say to each of you, let no vain ambition of rejoicing over Antioch possess you individually or collectively; but let the general thought be to end this task which has so well begun. Give the city to him as a reward through whom it shall be won; better one should have it than all be without it; better one be rewarded

than all be deprived of this victory, which is so necessary.

“If any counsel, wiser, better, or more salutary than this can be devised, suggest it. It is for you, noble Crusaders, to determine the question. If what I have said be wanting in wisdom, supply the deficiency; if I have said more than becomes my position, disregard it; if I have said what was wrong, reject it; if I have said what is right, assent to it.”

To these words of the Bishop of Puy an universal assent was given. Each of the nobles present delivered, in accordance to his rank and dignity, his opinion; and all, from the highest to the lowest, coincided in the views of Adelmar, and confirmed, even by a solemn oath, that the conditions insisted upon by Bohemond should be complied with. Bohemond then disclosed to the chiefs of the army the plan he intended to adopt, and each repaired to his quarters to have scaling ladders prepared.

As to Bohemond, he determined to repair to the Round Towers at the appointed hour, taking as his sole companions Philip of Brefney and Guy of Mascon.

CHAPTER XVI.

PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT.

THE next day, Baghi Sian and *his friend* Ibrahim were seated in the luxurious chamber reserved for his orgies by the Turkish ruler over Antioch. Both were engaged in refreshing themselves with an indulgence forbidden by their prophet, for in the midst of the costly viands before them there were flasks and golden goblets filled with the richest wines.

In the moody looks and the frowning brows, both of the Governor of Antioch and his lieutenant, there was no semblance of festivity; and therefore, the luxuries they partook of seemed to be participated in more for the purpose of dissipating care, than as a means of enjoyment. Ibrahim was unconscious how much his self-disclosures had lowered him in the estimation of his companion; and he consequently preserved the same manner towards Baghi Sian, which he had always observed, although he could not but feel conscious that there was a coolness in the reception towards him, and a guardedness of expression in addressing him, which he had never before remarked. As to Baghi Sian he looked upon Ibrahim with abhorrence, but was anxious to conceal the state of his feelings respecting the lieutenant, first because he was the only one he could endure as an associate, and next, because in a time like the present, when the city that he commanded was besieged by a numerous and valiant army, he knew that perfect

reliance could be placed in Ibrahim's skill as a general, and his courage as a soldier. He distrusted Ibrahim, but he trusted no one else; and though he determined that Ibrahim never again should have his confidence, still in the shrewdness of Ibrahim's remarks, as well as in the malignity of his nature, he found frequently a cue to guide his judgment, and a willing response in his own bad heart.

Thus sat these two men, both despising and distrusting the other, yet in manner and in words still seeming to be boon companions and sincere friends; and their intercourse apparently, as unreserved as it ever had been.

They had been sitting now for some time together—moody, silent, morose—eating, drinking, yet uttering not one word, when Ibrahim, as if a sudden thought had occurred to him, said:—

“What a strange, incomprehensible lie that was which the knave told you yesterday, of the Turkish maiden being concealed in the chamber of Feroz!”

“It would be alike strange and incomprehensible as a statement;” remarked Baghi Sian, “if it were, as you say, a lie without any semblance of a fact to rest upon.”

“And there was none such.”

“It is not just to say so,” continued Baghi Sian. “There was a fact to which our own eyes were witness.”

“What!” cried Ibrahim, “that Selim, when convicted of having told a falsehood, had pointed to a spy returning to the Christian camp, escorted by four soldiers. What possible connexion can there be between a woman in the chamber of Feroz, and a spy that had passed beyond the reach of a balista?”

"Selim said there was," doggedly remarked Baghi Sian.

"Selim should say something—do something to save his worthless ears from the scissors, and his feet from the bastinado, and hence he slew, or attempted to slay, four good brave soldiers. Knave! I hope I may again lay hands upon him, and I shall have him impaled for that discharge from the balista. I tell you he gave utterance to a lie—and I *know* it."

"Know it!" exclaimed Baghi Sian, aroused out of his torpidity of manner towards Ibrahim—"how could you possibly know it? The men who might have proved the fact one way or another, were killed on the spot."

"Not outright killed," replied Ibrahim. "Three were slain at once; the fourth was mortally wounded—and that fourth was honest Mustapha; you may remember his dexterity with the sword as a headsman. He never failed in decapitating a criminal with a single blow. I remember how heartily you enjoyed the joke, when he took off the heads of ten Christians with as many blows, and when you complimented him on his skill, he replied, 'It was quite a luxury for a person to be beheaded by him,' and requested that when there was any friend of yours you desired to have killed, and yet would save him from unnecessary pain, you should send for him."

"I remember Mustapha very well," said Baghi Sian. "Poor fellow! and was he one of the four soldiers slain yesterday?"

"He was," replied Ibrahim; "and the villain who slew him shall dearly rue his dexterity as a bowman, should he ever come within the swing of my scimitar."

"You may impale, or quarter, or flay alive the villain who slew honest, dexterous Mustapha, as you please," said Baghi Sian. "But Mustapha, you say, was mortally wounded. Is he still living?"

"Alas! no," replied Ibrahim. "But I saw him, spoke with him, questioned him before he died."

"Well—well—well," cried the impatient Baghi Sian, "what said he of the Turkish maiden?"

"Not one word."

"Not one word!"

"No," said Ibrahim, "not one single word; but upon my asking him who it was that he was accompanying to the outermost line of the Christian encampment, he answered, '*It was a spy—whom he well knew, and that he had often so accompanied before, and who had always brought back valuable intelligence to Antioch.*'"

These latter expressions were the invention of Ibrahim.

"Mustapha added," continued Ibrahim, "that though he knew where the shot came from, still he did not suspect any one to have discharged it *but a Christian*, as his hatred to the Christians was well known, and he never lost an opportunity of exhibiting it. He said, too, that his great consolation in dying was, that he had been a relentless persecutor of Christianity, and he died in the hope that all the bad deeds he had done to them would help him to a high throne in Paradise; and, with these words, the pious and incomparable Mustapha expired."

"Then it was a lie—a foul lie—a base lie—an insolent lie to tell to me. Oh! the next moment I see that villain Selim, his head shall be rolling on the

earth before me, without even one word of explanation," exclaimed the furious Baghi Sian.

Ibrahim rubbed his hands with joy, at finding that the few words he had himself added to those which actually had been spoken by Mustapha, had removed from his path a rival who was seeking, like himself, to have an unlimited command over the wealth of his patron.

"It was a lie—an infamous lie," continued Baghi Sian, "for the purpose of extorting gold from me."

"That is the fact," drily remarked Ibrahim.

"It was a lie," said Baghi Sian, still chafing with rage. "The knave, I suppose, had been told how anxious I was to discover where the Turkish maiden was concealed, and hearing of a spy being with Feroz, he took advantage of the circumstance to fix suspicion on an honest man."

"When you choose to exercise your faculties," said Ibrahim, "I know no man who can surpass you in astuteness, in perfect reasoning, and in matchless clearness of judgment."

The gross flattery was well-timed, and at a former period would have won for him who uttered it a purse of gold. Baghi Sian at first smiled, but the smile was changed into a frown when he remembered the words that Ibrahim had spoken in his magic sleep.

"I beseech you, Ibrahim," said Baghi Sian, "to say to me what you think in your heart, and not to utter words that can only be intended to gratify my vanity. You know I have no vanity in my nature."

"Compound of vanity and selfishness," thought Ibrahim to himself; "I dishonour myself when I compliment you."

"But," continued Baghi Sian, "having been misled in one instance, how comes it to pass that neither you nor any one else can discover any traces of the Turkish maiden?"

"You never asked *me* to seek after her," replied Ibrahim.

"Never asked *you*!" indignantly remarked Baghi Sian. "Never asked you! Why should I ask you? Do you not know my anxiety about her? Are you not aware I would give the whole of the wealth I possess, to have her in this citadel?"

"I never heard you say such words before. If I had," observed Ibrahim, "your words would have made a due impression upon me, and I would have realized your wishes."

"Obtain a clue to where the maiden *is*," said Baghi Sian, "and you shall have that reward which I promised Selim. By stratagem or by force place her here in this citadel, and I tell you there is not a gold coin in my treasure-chamber that you may not bear away with you as your own."

"The first thing to be done," remarked Ibrahim, "is to find out where she is."

"Aye, aye, that is it. Now," said Baghi Sian, "let me see what is the first thing *you* would do."

Ibrahim, enchanted at the prospect of obtaining such immense wealth, now for the first time entered heartily into a subject, which hitherto he had been discussing with no other object in view than that of irritating the temper, and baffling, while pretending to aid, Baghi Sian, in his search after Amine.

"If I understand what you have told me about this matter," said Ibrahim, "when you were struck

down from your horse by a young Crusader knight, the maiden was seized upon by the Greek."

"Yes, yes, that is the fact," observed Baghi Sian.

"Very well," replied Ibrahim. "Up to this time you have been inquiring after the maiden. Of course, you know where the Greek is."

"The Greek! psha! who cares about the Greek? Who would desire ever again to see him, unless it was to find he was bringing the Turkish woman with him?"

"That may be; but still, when you cannot tell me where both are, how can you be sure that where *the one is, the other* is not there also?"

"I never thought of that before," said Baghi Sian. "Dolt! and fool that I am!"

"Your Highness," remarked Ibrahim, with a slight sneer, "will not allow others to flatter you, and I must admit you are not disposed to flatter yourself."

"Pardon me for my former rudeness," said Baghi Sian, delighted to find a new clue presented to him. "There are ten purses of gold, I pray you to accept them."

" 'The gift of a friend is sweeter than honey,' says the proverb; it is welcome as sunshine on a winter's day, and more cheering than the breeze of morning in the sultry heats of summer. 'These are wise maxims,' continued Ibrahim, 'and I never experienced how true they were until this moment. Your Highness can command my best energies, and all my faculties in a search after the Turkish maiden.'"

"Thanks! thanks!" said Baghi Sian, who reposed confidence in the talents, but not in the sincerity or

honesty of his associate. "What say you, then, as to the Greek?"

"I think he is playing you false," said Ibrahim, with perfect confidence in the accuracy of his assertion; for he was one of those self-confident, worldly-wise men, who fancy their reasoning must be just when they assume that their fellow-men are base, corrupt, treacherous, and wicked.

"You think that he is playing me false?"

"I do; I always thought so—always said so," said Ibrahim.

"Not *always*," drily remarked Baghi Sian.

"I beg your Highness' pardon," continued Ibrahim. "I feel certain I never could have said otherwise than that the Greek was a knave. I am positive I cannot recollect having said or thought otherwise."

"Very probably not," observed Baghi Sian; "but now your reasons why you at present denounce him as acting falsely and knavishly towards me."

"Look at his entire conduct," said Ibrahim. "He has come here, seeking money from you, and obtaining it, too; and each time promising that the next time he came he would bring the maiden with him. Well, these have been his promises; but what have been his performances? Have they not ever had the same ending? *a failure*. I admit there was a clever excuse made, and for the last failure there may be offered a better exculpation than for any other, because he brought you within reach of the maiden. But consider, if you and he were prepared to carry her away, there was also prepared (I do not say by *whom*) the means for effectually resisting you; but still, the Greek was seen carrying her away.

Since then—*she* has disappeared, and *so has he*. If he were able to take her away, and desired to give her to you, what more natural, what more easy, than to have borne her off to Antioch? I can understand the Greek concealing her from the Christians, but *why* conceal her from *you*? If afraid of delivering her up, where could he be so secure from pursuit or from vengeance as in the midst of your soldiers, and shielded by the walls of Antioch? Why, then, conceal himself, if he were not also concealing the maiden from you? And why conceal the maiden from you, but because he believes once he has delivered her up to you, he loses the power of extracting more gold from you. When the pond has been deprived of its fishes, no one wastes his bait upon its waters. As long as he can tempt you to pursue, he has a command over you; but when the chase is at an end, and the game has been run down, no one thinks of the huntsman. You see how he has acted, and I point out to you the plain, intelligible motive for his conduct."

"You do—you do," said Baghi Sian. "It must be as you say. The Greek has the maiden in his power—a search must be made after *him*. When next he *presents* himself within these walls, we shall try the strength of torture upon him, and extract from his mangled limbs the secret of her hiding-place."

The conversation of the two friends was interrupted by the appearance of the old man, the magician, in the chamber. Baghi Sian started at the apparition, for he had given strict orders that none should be allowed to approach him, except upon matters of urgent necessity affecting the safety of the city. His

face reddened with rage at finding the command had been disobeyed, and he turned fiercely upon the old man as he stood bowing lowly and silently before him.

"Well, sirrah! what means this intrusion upon my privacy? Wast thou not told it was my wish not to be disturbed?"

"I was informed that the command of your Highness was very strict upon that point, but that there was one condition attached to it."

"Well," said Baghi Sian, still in an angry tone.

"And that condition I have complied with," replied the old man, in a firm, composed voice, as his eye rested with pleasure upon the piles of gold plate before him.

"Ha!" exclaimed Baghi Sian, bounding up from the low couch on which he had been sitting cross-legged, "thou hast, then, information to give me of importance as regards the safe keeping of Antioch."

"I have," said the old man, not turning to look either at Baghi Sian or Ibrahim, but his eyes remaining fixed as if they had been fascinated by the glaring magnificence of the golded plate.

"Be cautious in your dealing with this man," whispered Ibrahim to Baghi Sian. "Remember he is the confederate of the Greek runaway, who is seeking by every base device to extract money from you. See how his covetous eye feasts itself upon the gorgeous display of gold on your table."

"I thank you for the caution, and will act upon it," replied Baghi Sian, who then turned to the old man, and said in a tone of disdain, "I am prepared to hear thy tidings."

"And I to tell them," replied the old man.

"Proceed," said Baghi Sian.

"I have, continued the old man, "risked life and limb to bring thee tidings of great importance. Hast no reward to give for such service?"

"It is as I guessed," whispered Ibrahim, "the old knave does not even disguise from you that he wants to cheat you out of money."

"The reward I give," said Baghi Sian, "is always in proportion to the value of the information received. If thou hast risked life and limb merely to intrude upon me in my few moments of relaxation, with some gossiping story of no importance to me to know, then thou hast risked life and limb upon the chance of losing them by being justly punished for thy folly."

"The tidings I bring are of importance. Dost wish to know them? if so, name your reward," doggedly and surlily replied the old man.

"If the information is considered by me of importance, thou shalt name thyself the reward for them," said Baghi Sian; "and on the other hand, if I conceive it worthless, I shall name the punishment for an impertinent intrusion upon my time."

"Be it so," replied the old man; "then I claim as my reward those two golden vases, around whose rims are entwined thick circles of rubies."

"Agreed," said Baghi Sian; "and if I do not approve of thy intelligence, I doom thee to lose thy tongue, so that thou never again shalt play the braggart."

"And I would suggest his ears also," said Ibrahim, "so that he may never again listen to what is not worth repeating."

"I am content," said the old man, as he cast a look of contempt upon Ibrahim.

"Well, proceed; what hast thou now to say?" said Baghi Sian, anxious for an excuse to gratify his cruel disposition in the mutilation of the old man who stood before him, and was then completely in his power.

"My information is this," said the old man: "the Crusaders are about to make an attack upon Antioch, and they calculate upon being in possession of the city before forty-eight hours have elapsed, and their calculation is based upon the fact that there are persons in Antioch prepared to aid them, by betraying the city into their hands."

At the same moment Baghi Sian and Ibrahim started up from the banqueting table and grasped their swords,

"What! the Christians about to attack Antioch! traitors in the city prepared to aid them! Here, Ibrahim, is, indeed, important intelligence. The vases are yours; old man, you have fairly won them."

"Stop—stop—not so fast, sirrah," said Ibrahim, arresting the hand of the old man as he was about to clutch the golden vases; "any knave could invent such a story as that. The question first to be examined is not whether such information is given, but—is it true? If true, how comest thou to know it?"

"When I tell you how I have happened to hear such tidings," answered the old man, "you will have no doubt as to its truth."

"Speak, sirrah," said Ibrahim, vexed at finding the old man so immoveable, and determined, if he could, not to permit him to carry off the rich ornaments of which he had hoped some time or another to

be himself the possessor. "Speak, sirrah, and observe, if thou attemptest to deceive us, that though his Highness may be satisfied to take thy tongue and ears, nought less than thy life shall content me."

The old man looked at Baghi Sian, and at once perceived in his scowling brow that in him he would find no protection from the violence of Ibrahim, and from that moment he resolved, if ever the opportunity presented itself, to take the life of Baghi Sian. For the present, he saw that all his ability and cleverness would be required to enable him to escape from Ibrahim. He judged of Ibrahim by his own heart, and perceived that if he desired to reserve himself for practising, upon one or both, some act of vengeance, he must not *then* claim the reward to which he knew he was fairly entitled.

"Speak, sirrah!" said Ibrahim; "but be careful, I tell thee, for by thy silence I detect thee; thou art plotting the narration of an improbable tale."

"I am about to tell the simple truth, plainly, briefly, and I hope intelligibly," replied the old man. "It was, I suppose, about two hours past midnight, the dawn of day was certainly some hours distant, and although there was no moon shining, the stars afforded sufficient light to discern persons at a short distance. I was lurking on the outskirts of the Christian encampment, when I observed three warriors approaching: the three were walking at a quick pace together, and they were plainly coming from the City of Antioch. The moment I perceived them I flung myself flat on the ground, and they passed within ten yards of me. The persons of the

three were well known to me: the first was an old soldier, a man practised in all the stratagems of war; his name was Guy of Mascon."

The old man paused, and there was a hollow sound, as of horror, in mentioning the hated name.

"Well, well, go on, do not stop to think of what thou art going to say next," said Ibrahim, with malignant irony in his voice.

The old man did not appear to observe the insinuation against his truthfulness, but proceeded:—"The second was an Irish knight, Philip of Brefney, the same who unhorsed his Highness in the Christian encampment."

"It was fairly done in the battle field," remarked Baghi Sian. "I bear him no resentment for that. I hope, however, we may meet again, and I shall repay the blow with a soldier's sword."

"The third," said the old man, "was Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum."

"Oh! monstrous story!" said Ibrahim. "What! the Prince of Tarentum, the chief man amongst all the Crusaders, with the exception of Godfrey of Buouillon, skulking like a spy, with two companions and no armed band of knights to attend him! Dost think, old knave, that his Highness is such an idiot as to believe such a story as that?"

"Aye," chimed in Baghi Sian, "how thinkest thou I could be idiot and dolt enough to believe that the Prince Bohemond was wandering about the walls of Antioch at midnight?"

"Listen patiently to what I have to say, and, mayhap you shall find that what appears to be incredible is certainly true. As these three persons

passed me, I heard a portion of their conversation, and these are the exact words, as they reached my ears, of what was said by each :—

“ ‘I do not doubt what he says, nor what he proposes to do, but all I doubt is, will he have the firmness and the courage to adhere to what he has said.’ Said Guy of Mascon.

“ ‘I know from what *she* states respecting him that his mind is now fixed upon carrying out what *she* first proposed to him, and that he is prepared to lose his life sooner than abandon the project.’ Said Philip of Brefney.

“ ‘I am confident of its success ; I am sure of him ; he will do as he has promised.’ Said Prince Bohemond.

“ ‘Then that being the case, it will be ours before two nights more have passed away.’ Said Guy of Mascon.

“These,” continued the old man, “are the words I heard. They show that Antioch is about to be attacked ; that it will be attacked, because there is treachery somewhere in the city ; and now, let me add, that to effect such an object I see no improbability in one so high in rank as Prince Bohemond being abroad at midnight with only two companions. The city of Antioch is richer than the whole of his principality ; and when the person prepared to betray it could not come to him without being discovered, I can perceive no degradation in the prince proceeding at the only time when it could be done with safety, and without observation from those who might mar the plot, to have a conference with the traitor.”

"I warn thee, old man," said Ibrahim, "to be very careful that thou speakest naught but the truth to the three questions I am about to ask thee, for upon thy candour will depend the fact, whether or not thou shall leave this room a living man. Candour in reply to my questions may secure to thee life and limb, though it may leave thee without reward. Dost understand me?"

"I understand *you* perfectly," said the old man, believing that he detected in the address to him of Ibrahim, the determination to cheat him out of his promised gold.

"Very well!" continued Ibrahim. "Now here are the three questions I have to ask thee. Answer them plainly: do not attempt to *explain* them—only answer them candidly. Dost understand me?"

"Perfectly."

"These, then," said Ibrahim, "are my three questions:—First—In the conversation thou sayest thou heard between the three Crusaders, was the name of *Antioch* ever mentioned? Second—Is it not a fact that thou and the Greek Alexander of Constantinople have been constant associates? Third—Canst thou tell where Alexander has been hiding since the night he ran away with the Turkish maiden? Speak, man—speak, I say, without stuttering or hesitation."

"In answer to your first question, I have already mentioned, word for word, the conversation between the Crusaders as I heard it, and I am bound to admit that the word '*Antioch*' never was mentioned; but no one can doubt that, considering where they

were coming from, and the substance of their conversation, that they could——”

“No explanation. I said their should be no explanation,” said Ibrahim.

“Aye, aye ; no explanation,” replied Baghi Sian ; “when we know the facts we can give our own explanations to them. What sayest thou to Ibrahim’s second question ?”

“It is true,” said the old man, “the Greek Alexander and I have been very frequently together of late ; but——”

“No explanation,” interrupted Ibrahim.

“Oh, no—no explanation,” added Baghi Sian ; “but now reply to the third question.”

“Alexander the Greek,” replied the old man, “has been hiding in the neighbourhood of the Christian encampment.”

“Ha ! I knew it ; I was sure of it. Does not your Highness perceive how just was my surmise as to the artful Greek ?” said Ibrahim in a triumphant tone. “I pray your Highness to dismiss this man without injury to life or limb, for he has answered my questions with perfect candour, and if he had not done so, I could have convicted him out of his own mouth of practising a deception upon you. Go away honest man ; thy zeal may be great, but years are manifestly weakening thy understanding, if, indeed, thou ever hast been remarkable for intelligence and ability. It is impossible, and therefore cannot be true, that a man of the high rank held by Prince Bohemond would travel with but two attendants to have an interview with a traitor ; because, if such a proposition were made to him, he would at once per-

ceive it was an attempt to make him a prisoner, or to slay him under the false pretence of holding a conference with a man of whom previously he could not possibly know anything. A leader of an army never so risks the safety of the troops that follow his banner in battle. Bohemond is an old, practised, wily general, and could not be entrapped into an interview away from his followers at midnight. Showing, then, as I think I have done, that the person thou didst hear speaking was not, because *he could not*, be Bohemond, what does the conversation thou hast narrated amount to? Nothing—absolutely nothing; some wild project in which a women is mixed up, because, according to that conversation as detailed by thee, some one was more than once referred to as '*she*.' Am I not not correct in saying so?"

"Yes," said the old man, "but——"

"No explanation," interrupted Ibrahim. "It all turned upon something '*she* stated,' and upon something '*she* first proposed.' Now, what in the name of the Holy Prophet could a woman have to do with proposing to betray Antioch? No woman that I am aware of, is the caretaker of wall, rampart, or tower in Antioch, and yet thy story, which would make the conversation refer to the capture of Antioch, all hinges upon the help of a female, and the proposal of a female to betray it! Was there ever heard any nonsense like to this? And yet it is to tell such an improbability as this! a tale that has no intelligible beginning, and no comprehensible ending, that thou hast disturbed his Highness. Go away, good man, and be thankful to his Highness that he

remits that punishment which would be but a just retribution for thy grave and gross indiscretion in disturbing him. Go away, I say, honest old man, his Highness pardons thee. The Christians are not fools, and would not weaken their force by an attack on Antioch, when they stand in hourly fear of being assailed by the multitudinous army of Corbohan. Away, old man, thou art forgiven."

"I take my leave of you," said the magician. "I have told you the truth, and you will not believe it. I lose my reward because you will not listen to my words; but if it be neglected, you will lose much more than I do—your lives. If Antioch be captured by the Crusaders, I am speaking now to two men who, forty-eight hours from this time, will be numbered with the dead. When next we meet, Baghi Sian, you will be sure which has told you the truth, the man who stands by your side, or the man who now takes his leave of you. Farewell."

The old man looked again at the two golden vases, and muttered to himself—"I must have the rubies on these vases, or lose my life in the attempt. Villians! you have defrauded me; but your blindness will be your own destruction, and I shall be *here* to witness it."

"Well, Ibrahim," said Baghi Sian to his associate, when they were again alone, "what think you of the old man's story? He spoke as if he believed it to be true."

"And I would act as if I too believed it to be true, which I do not. I merely think it was the *Greek's* device to win from you those golden vessels which the old man covets. Whether true or false, I would

redouble my precautions in the care of the city, at least I would make the Christians that are still in Antioch suffer on account of the conduct of their associates outside the walls, and to whom, no doubt, *they would*, if they could, betray the city."

"Right," remarked Baghi Sian; "and then recollect what poor Mustapha said, that he was sure the balista had been discharged against him by the hand of a Christian. Come, Ibrahim, let a general search be made for all the Christians in Antioch; arrest them all, put chains upon them, cast them into dungeons. Be diligent in your search; I permit you to plunder the house of every Christian, and the command is one, I am sure, that will be diligently executed."

"Most punctually," replied Ibrahim, with alacrity; "before nightfall, you may rest assured there shall not be a Christian in Antioch without fetters on his feet, and chains on his hands, and——"

"Without money in his purse," said Baghi Sian.

"Without money in his purse, be sure of it," added Ibrahim, joyously.

"And at nightfall," said Baghi Sian, "you shall accompany me. There is not one of the four hundred towers of Antioch but shall be visited by us. If there be treachery on foot, we shall detect the traitors in the midst of their plot."

"Traitors! psha!" said Ibrahim, as he followed Baghi Sian from the apartment. "The greatest traitor your Highness can ever see in Antioch was the old villain, the companion of the Greek, who sought by a fabricated tale, to win a reward to which he was not entitled. Remember the army of Corbohan is within two days' march of Antioch."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE EMIR OF THE ROUND TOWERS.

It was night. Darkness had fallen upon the earth for some hours, and all around was solemn, still, and moveless, as if the whole race of mankind were buried in profound repose. The air itself seemed to be motionless; and there was not a single breath to fan the flushed cheek of him who, alone of the whole city of Antioch, seemed at that moment to be awake, and watchful. From time to time the solitary man peered over the battlements, and gazed with a longing eye into the blinding darkness, as if, by the intensity of his gaze, he could penetrate the fathomless depth of its obscurity, and impart a ray of light to that awful darkness which lay beneath him and around him. From time to time the watcher closed his eyes, as if he would concentrate all his faculties in the single sense of hearing; and hanging, with outstretched head and body, over the seemingly bottomless abyss beneath, turning his ear towards the Christian encampment, as if he would detect the minutest sound that would indicate a movement, or afford to him the hope that those he was expecting were on their way towards him.

The solitary watcher was Feroz, who thus stood on the highest of the Round Towers under his command, and who awaited that great moment when he should act upon the suggestion of his child, and yield up the place under his command to the Christians.

"In less than an hour from this time," said Feroz, communing with himself, "the Crusaders should be at the foot of this tower. It is strange that I cannot as yet note a sound indicative of the slightest movement in their camp.

"What! if they are not coming; and the opportunity I have afforded them be not taken advantage of! How awful the consequences to them and—to myself.

"But this is a foolish supposition; *they will come*—they must—and yet—no—there is a chance they may not do so. They may have heard of what has just occurred in Antioch; they may have been told how the Christians in Antioch have this day been treated by Baghi Sian—of the search for them in all parts of the city—of the numbers that have been arrested and put in chains—of the spoliation of houses—of all those circumstances that would go to prove that my plot with Bohemond had been discovered; and, therefore, their attempt now to take Antioch from a garrison, put on the alert for its defence, would alone end in the destruction of those by whom it was assailed. All this may have occurred; as, doubtless, they are, through spies, well informed of what is passing amongst us; and if they *do* know them, then there is the chance they will not come—

"Hist! hist—I hear a sound as of soldiers advancing—they come! they come!"

Feroz leant eagerly over the battlements for a few minutes; but it was only to be convinced that his imagination had deceived him.

"No! no!" he resumed, "they are not *yet* coming!—if they ever do come.

“ And now that I *do* think—*can* think calmly over the events of this awful day, is it not strange that the plan for delivering up the city, which could only be known to myself in Antioch, and to none but a few of the Christian leaders, to Philip of Brefney, Amine, and the old soldier who accompanied Prince Bohemond last night, should, notwithstanding all our precautions, have so far escaped as to give rise to the rumour that Antioch is about to be betrayed into the hands of the Christians.

“ Are there, in sooth, evil spirits in the air who, foreseeing the diminution of their dominion by means of the good act I am resolved to do, and yet, being unable to divulge the fact, infect the minds of their followers as with an epidemic, by instilling into them an apprehension of what is about to occur.

“ No spy could have detected our plot—no eaves-dropper have overheard our discourse; or else I should long since have been arrested with the innocent Christians now in chains; and instead of being, as I am at present, a guardian of the three towers, I should long ere this hour have lain a headless corpse in the ditch that is beneath me.

“ I have not been betrayed—of that I feel assured—and yet some rumour of a plot has oozed out, and it is credited, or else Baghi Sian and his cruel lieutenant, Ibrahim, never would have acted as they have done this day. Baghi Sian’s suspicions are aroused; but he knows not whom to condemn as a criminal, and, therefore, he is unjust to many innocent persons.

“ Strange! most strange! how such a rumour should have got abroad; but now that it is evoked,

the slightest accident may afford a clue to what is really intended, and then—my death is inevitable.

“Well! and if it should be so, then my death would afford but a poor reparation for my past life of evil; and happy! oh! how happy for me if I can purchase salvation with my life, though it be but in the vain effort to do what is right. But hist! hist! I certainly hear now the advance of soldiers. My ears *now* I am sure do not deceive me.”

Feroz again leant over the battlements, and again listened attentively.

“Yes,” he exclaimed, “there are certainly footsteps approaching. Thank heaven!”

Scarcely was the ejaculation uttered when his eyes were shocked by perceiving star-like lights appearing on the distant battlements, and that they were gradually approaching the spot on which he stood, and whilst he watched the flickering fires as they were coming towards him, his ear caught a sound of the slow, heavy, but cautious march of soldiers in the plain beneath him.

“Alas! alas!” he cried, “here is Baghi Sian visiting the various watches on the ramparts; and beneath I find are the Crusaders fast approaching to the Round Towers. What is to be done, if the Crusaders mistake these lights for signals to *retire* or—to *advance*? In either case our plan fails; or, if they do not perceive them, and yet send a messenger upon the rampart by the rope I have let down, and he comes here when Baghi Sian is speaking with me!!! Alas! alas! what is to be done? I shall pull in the rope. I can do that much at least to prevent so terrible an accident occurring.”

Feroz ran to a rope which was hanging from the battlements to the earth; he pulled at it, expecting to be able to haul it in, in a few moments; but found all his exertions vain.

"Woe is me!" he said—"I am too late, there is a Crusader ascending. Ha! *here* he is."

At that instant the bright steel cap of a Crusader appeared over the battlement, and the hand of the soldier had grasped a firm hold, with the intention of bounding inside, when Feroz caught hold of the man, and said:—"Back, back for your life—here is Baghi Sian, with a numerous body-guard attending him. If he or they should see you, they will slay you; back, then, with all speed: when you descend to the earth, give the rope two chucks, and I shall then cut it. As soon as Baghi Sian has left this, say to your leader, I will call from the wall 'Amine;' let him repeat the word we used as a recognition last night, as a signal that he and his followers are prepared to ascend, and I shall then let down another rope. Away! away, now, in all haste—mind, two chucks to the rope, and then—it will be cut away."

The bright helmet disappeared, and as it did so, Feroz drew his sword, and holding one hand on the rope, he waited with a throbbing heart to find the notification given of the man's safe descent. He felt the rope turn twice with a sudden motion beneath his hand, his sword severed the rope, and as he did so, there was a short, low cry; and at the same moment, the topmost tower on which Feroz stood was filled as if with one blaze of light issuing from a hundred torches, borne by the soldiers of Baghi Sian, and in the midst of them walked the ruler of Antioch, attended by his associate, Ibrahim.

"See!" said Ibrahim, with a malignant sneer, "what a careful sentinel the faithful Feroz is; he not only is at his post, but he is so watchful, that he has already drawn his sword, so as to be prepared to kill any foeman that might venture to intrude upon his post."

"I trust," said Feroz, sheathing his sword, as he spoke, "it is not a crime for a warrior, when he feels his limbs chilled with cold, to exercise them in that way, which most conduces to excite warmth in an aged and chilled frame."

"Thou art at thy post, where a good soldier ought ever to be found," replied Baghi Sian; "and if thou choosest to expose thy sword-blade to rust, that is a folly for which thy general has no right to censure thee, although the slave who polishes thy weapons may have good cause to complain of the additional trouble imposed upon him. I have, however, something more serious to speak to thee about than flourishing thy sword-blade amid the falling dews of night. Thou hast heard of the rumors that prevail in Antioch."

"I have," replied Feroz, "and of the precautionary measures you have adopted."

"Mine are but general measures," said Baghi Sian, "but what I wish to discover is the guilty man in particular."

"To you, I am sure, answered Feroz, "it would be a very desirable thing to know."

"Hum!" grunted out, in a discontented tone, Baghi Sian, "has it never occurred to thee that suspicion was likely to fall upon thyself?"

"Upon me!" exclaimed Feroz—"and wherefore upon me?"

"The plot is a Christian plot: thou hast been a Christian," said Baghi Sian; "and therefore it may be supposed thou sympathisest with those of whom thou hast once been a member."

"If that be so, then why am *I* still left in command of a post, which it is in my power to betray?" replied Feroz. "But with due respect to your Highness, I must observe, that suspicion cannot have, as yet at least, reached me."

"And wherefore?" asked Baghi Sian.

"Because if it had," answered Feroz, "instead of now having the honour to speak to your Highness, I would be cast into a dungeon, with manacles on my hands, and fetters on my feet."

"Thou arguest like an ingenious casuist," said Ibrahim, who up to this moment had remained a silent listener to the dialogue between his chief and his subordinate, and who perceived that the latter was able to baffle the former, in a war of words. His own suspicions had been aroused by finding an old soldier like Feroz on a high tower, with a drawn sword. He could not connect the fact with anything else; but believing ill of all men, he was convinced he was right in supposing that Feroz would be a traitor, if a sufficient price were paid for his treachery, and therefore he resolved to see if he himself could not bring home to the renegade the crime which it was his conviction he was capable of perpetrating. Confident in the superiority of his own mental powers to all who surrounded him, he therefore determined to provoke a controversy with Feroz, in the hope of entrapping him.

"Thou arguest like an ingenious casuist," said

enemy when they beheld so small a body of men advancing against them, were confident of completing their victory; and with this intent they closed their ranks together so as to resist the charge of the Christian knights. The knights paused for a moment—it was but for a moment—it was to make the sign of the cross upon their forehead; and then, with lance in rest, to plunge, as the arrow from the bow flies with a deadly and sure aim, into the opposing masses of the enemy. Nought could resist that charge—back, back, back, in despite of themselves, the boastful enemy was driven to the river, across which the only means of escape was the Pharfar-bridge. And then when the Turks came to that pass, awful was the crash—and frightful the uproar and piercing the screams, as fugitive impeded fugitive in his flight upon the bridge, and some were slain with the lance, and others with the sword, and others by their fall down the precipitous steep to the river, and more were smothered in the waters of the Orontes. And as the knights thus drove them back to destruction, others of our men come to their aid, and rendered that destruction more sure by shooting or knocking down those who clung to the columns of the bridge, or had escaped to the opposite bank by swimming. The slaughter of those vile infidels was awful. The fair waters of the river, as they ran from beneath the bridge, were literally red with blood. Never, in any battle-field, was anything heard like to the clamours and shrieks of victors and of vanquished, such as that day were heard around Pharfar-bridge. The arrows flew in clouds from the Christian ranks, and each arrow brought instant

death or a mortal wound to a flying Turk, to one drowning, or seeking to escape from drowning. On that day the enemy lost not less than twelve of their commanders—those whom they call Emirs; and of the common men their loss was at least a thousand in number. It was a glorious victory; but it was followed by a great scandal, which I am about to narrate to you. Upon the day following this battle, some of the Turks crept out at morning dawn from the city, collected together the bodies of their dead, and buried them on the other side of the Pharfar. According to the custom of their country, they interred with the great men who had been slain, rich and precious ornaments, cloaks embroidered with gold, golden coin, golden-covered quivers, and golden-tipped arrows, and various other things which it is not necessary to mention. Intelligence of what they had done reached the Christian encampment. And then what did some wretches amongst us? they broke open the tombs; they robbed the dead; they mutilated the bodies of the dead. I fear to tell it—but I believe it. They did worse than mutilate the bodies of the dead.”

“Worse than rob and mutilate the bodies of the buried dead!” said the bishop, “I cannot understand what worst crime thou canst suppose those persons to be guilty of.”

“Alas! my Lord and Bishop,” said Guy of Mascon, “I cannot only suppose a worse crime, but I can tell you of a crime—compared with which, this I have spoken will appear actually trivial.”

“Guy,” observed the good bishop, “I begin to fear listening to you.”

"My Lord and Bishop, there is a crime so horrible that human nature shudders to think of it; what say you to men feeding upon the flesh of men?"

"I believe," replied the bishop, turning pale as he spoke, "that such an atrocity has occurred more than once; for I know something of the past history of the past world. But thinkest thou that famine itself could force a Crusader to do that of which thou speakest?"

"I neither speak, nor suggest, nor think aught ill of any *Crusader*," replied Guy. "My suspicions rest upon the pilgrims, that is, the pretended pilgrims—and upon the beggars, that is, the sham beggars that cluster in our camp, or about it. Since the spoliation of the tombs, there have been strong suspicious circumstances to show that the bodies of the dead are fed upon—and trifling incidents, not noticed at the moment, but since then reflected upon, make me believe, that the false pilgrim is one of those man-eaters—and it shall not be——"

"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord."

Such were the words that sounded in whispered, but coarse accents, so close to the back of Guy, that he fancied he could feel an icy breath carrying them to his ear, and chilling him as they came.

The old soldier stood paralyzed for a minute, with staring eyes, and open mouth, an emblem of horror and surprise. At length he recovered himself, turned suddenly round, and in so doing, quickly drew forth his sword. His eye at once detected the opening in the tent, which was an entrance to the oratory, and instantly he dashed into it, perceived the prostrate priest on the altar steps, seized him—forced

the frightened priest to turn round and look at him, and then without uttering one word more, he dashed out of the tent, as if a sudden fit of madness had seized upon him.

The words that had produced so sudden a change in Guy, were unheard by the bishop, and hence the violent outburst on the part of Guy remained unknown to Adelmarr.

“Alas!” he exclaimed, “can it be that Guy is afflicted with insanity? He says things that are beyond belief. But let me pause; may it not be that Heaven is pleased to punish us for our supineness, by the many evils we are now enduring? There is a marvellous coincidence between the strange vision of the Antiochean priest and the strange assertions of the shrewd and valiant Guy of Mascon. Both required a rigid investigation. If true, ah! then the guilty must be punished, and the camp purified. But how purified? Let me think: let me think. I have before me the example of the *Latina major*, instituted by St. Gregory the Great—the great priest, the great bishop, the great pontiff; the great foe to the Greek tyrant; the great defender of popular rights in Rome; the great doctor of the Church; the great benefactor to the poor. And then there are the *litanie minores*, in which the mighty Charlemagne, the first Crusader, as we conceive him to be, took part; and then, there are the *processions* of one, I may regard as my own predecessor, of Claudius Mamertus, Bishop of Vienna, by which so many evils were averted: and that are now universally practised by the Church upon our *rogation days*. But I must consult my brother

"I would say—'Call the soldiers to the ramparts, for here is the enemy about to attack us,'" answered Feroz. "When the sun is above the horizon no one doubts it is daylight."

"Good," replied Ibrahim; "and when the sun has set, I say that night is approaching. I only wish to argue upon facts, and not upon suspicions."

"But there may be facts which give rise to suspicions," replied Baghi Sian. "Although we do not believe what the old spy, or rather knave, told us to-day, still we have acted upon it—and Feroz convinces me we were right in doing so."

It was well that Ibrahim did not observe how Feroz started and trembled, when he heard Baghi Sian say that he acted upon the information of a spy. Baghi Sian did notice the circumstance; but it passed unheeded by him, as he now felt assured, whoever was the traitor in Antioch, Feroz could not be the man. He therefore, instead of turning to Ibrahim for advice, directed his conversation to Feroz.

"And so, Emir, it is thy belief that there is a plot to betray Antioch into the hands of the Crusaders."

"I am convinced it is the fact," said Feroz.

"And by whom dost thou think that plot will be effected?" asked Baghi Sian.

"By one holding my position," said Feroz; "by some one who, having care of a tower, will admit the Crusaders into it."

"And so it must be," said Baghi Sian. "Ibrahim, why did you not think of that?"

"If I had, I do not see how I could suggest a remedy for such an evil," replied Ibrahim.

"I could," remarked Feroz.

"Well, and what would be *thy* remedy? I am anxious to learn what wise suggestion can emanate from thee," said the sneering Ibrahim.

"I would change all the Emirs from the towers they now hold to others," said Feroz.

"That is, thou wouldst change a traitor from a round-tower to a square-tower," said Ibrahim contemptuously. "The danger is not in the place the traitor is, but in the treason he bears with him from an old post to a new one."

"The danger is in the opportunity to commit the treason, and by removing him from a place with which he is well acquainted, you take away from him the opportunity to consummate what *you* consider to be his guilt," observed Feroz.

"The Emir Feroz is right," remarked Baghi Sian, "and I shall act on his suggestion *to-morrow*. It is too late to do so to-night."

"Do so," said Ibrahim, "and if you follow my advice, the first person to be removed from the Round Towers would be its clever, cautious, but too suspicious Emir. Farewell, Feroz, if thou canst fight as well as talk, no adversary shall find a defect in thy armour,"

No further greeting passed between the Governor of Antioch, his lieutenant, and the Emir of the Round Towers. They and their followers descended from the battlements, and in a few moments the flame of torches had disappeared, and Feroz was again left in silence and in darkness.

Feroz watched with anxiety the receding lights as they proceeded along the ramparts, and it was not

until the torches glimmered in the distance like twinkling stars, that he ventured to cast a look over the battlements, and to listen if he could hear any sound to denote the presence of those whom he wished to find there. To one unconscious that there could be soldiers beneath, there was nought to be seen, or to be heard; but to one, like Feroz, on the watch, there was perceivable a hushed movement of many men, and the occasional breaking of a bramble, as a cautious step was treading along; and at last he felt certain the Crusaders were below. He stooped down as he was searching for the coil of ropes which he had cast upon the earth, and as he did so, his hand fell on the uncovered face of a soldier, who was lying beneath the rampart.

"Fool, or knave!" said Feroz, holding to the naked throat of the man the short, sharp-pointed dagger, which he on the moment drew from his girdle, "what dost thou here?"

"I am the attendant of Ibrahim," said the trembling soldier; "he winked to me as I was departing with the other soldiers, to lie down here, and watch thee. Oh! spare my life, and I shall speed to him, and say I have seen thee do nothing but look over the rampart as if thou wast waiting for some persons to come to thee, and that finding they were there, thou wast seeking for something to cast down to them, when thou didst discover me, and spared my life. Oh, spare me!—ho! merc——"

The word was never finished. The dagger of Feroz, with a single thrust, had changed the human being, trembling in every limb, into a moveless and inanimate piece of clay.

"Poor wretch!" said Feroz, "I wish I could have spared thee; but if thou hadst been my own brother, and stood in the way of the resolution I have now taken to deliver up Antioch to the Crusaders, my dagger would have dispatched him, as it has disposed of thee. Would it were Ibrahim that lay in thy place. Ha! here is what I sought for—here is the rope."

Feroz fastened the rope firmly, strained it to its utmost tension, and then, satisfied it was perfectly secure, he looked over the battlements—glanced around him: the lights had disappeared; all was darkness and silence; silence below him, silence and darkness by his side.

"Now—now," exclaimed Feroz—"now the moment has come on which all depends. Now, though the tower were filled with infidels, and the word I am about to speak was to be followed by a hundred swords in my heart, or a hundred arms to cast me from the tower a mangled corpse to the plains beneath me, that word I *would* speak."

"What ho! there below—ho! I say.

"AMINE."

Feroz felt his heart beat audibly, as he listened with eager ears for a response. A minute elapsed, and no answer came.

Feroz trembled in every limb.

"Mayhap," said he, "they have not heard me; I will repeat the cry," and he shouted out as loud as he could cry—AMINE! AMINE! AMINE!"

And before he could repeat the name a third time, there arose into the air a voice that in his ear was full, clear, and melodious as a trumpet, uttering the response he had hoped to hear:—

"PHILIP OF BREFNEY."

"Right—right," cried Feroz, with buoyant joyousness, "they are names of happy omen. Now, friends, to ascend the tower," and as he spoke the words, he flung the thick coiled rope far away from him into the obscure night. The rope boomed with a heavy sound as it rushed down into the dark void beneath, and then lay motionless. The hand of Feroz rested on it for some moments, as it remained perfectly still beneath his trembling palm—and then stiffened with a sudden pull. There was some one ascending!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CAPTURE OF ANTIOCH—A TRUE PICTURE.

THE number of men who had been despatched from the Christian encampment, as if for the purpose of skirmishing with the outposts of the advancing army of Corbohan, did not exceed seven hundred men; but these seven hundred might be regarded as the flower of the Crusaders' army—all in the prime of youth, all experienced in war, and all as agile in body as they were dauntless in spirit. Their leaders, to whom alone the real purpose of their expedition was known, were Godfrey and Robert of Flanders. The words addressed to these chosen warriors by Godfrey of Bouillon have been preserved by Albert of Aix-la-Chapelle, and though brief, are worthy of being remembered.

"Brother soldiers," said Duke Godfrey, "pilgrims

on the road to Jerusalem—warriors, who have devoted your lives to God, you are now proceeding to encounter your malignant foeman, the Turks. We are engaged in an affair which is soon to lead to a desperate and deadly conflict—to fight the foes of God, and, I trust, to win a victory over them. March on, then—march fearlessly; but, to insure success, it is necessary to march silently. I prohibit, under the penalty of death, any one amongst you, no matter what may occur, to speak above his breath.”

The soldiers fancied that the service, for which they were required to meet the enemy, was in the open field, or to lie in wait in abuscade; but none supposed that the duty they would be called upon to perform would be to scale walls, or to capture a mighty city.

The march of these soldiers was, at first, along a precipitous mountain path; but from that they turned away as the darkness of night came on, and were led to the point where Prince Bohemond awaited them, beneath the tower which he hoped soon to have surrendered into his hands. And there were he and the Count of Flanders in a narrow valley, awaiting the men on whose valour reliance for complete success was fully placed.

The man who had been sent forward to Feroz to ascertain if all was prepared and ready for the reception of Bohemond, returned to say that, now the torch-bearers and guards had departed there was no longer any danger of the plot being discovered, and that Feroz was willing and anxious to receive them. The whole body of the Crusaders, under the command of Godfrey and Robert of Flanders, moved to the base

of the Round Tower, for the purpose of ascending its walls.

At that moment a strange and unheard of circumstance occurred—fear fell upon the hearts of the Crusaders, and as they looked upon the scaling ladders, leading they knew not whither, the end of the ladders resting upon the earth, but their topmost heights lost in darkness, a panic came upon the men: they fancied this was a project, not for the destruction of the Turks, but their own, and therefore they shrunk back, when they were called upon to ascend.

The courage that was in his own heart Duke Godfrey sought to inspire into theirs, by addressing them in the words following:—

“Remember in whose Name it is that you have already abandoned your country, and forsaken your kindred: remember with what noble, generous ardour you renounced all earthly enjoyments, and declared there was no danger, not even death itself, which you would fear to encounter for Christ’s sake. Forward, then, soldiers, to the task you are required to perform; remember that those who live, and in this life act worthily and in accordance with the name of Christians, which they bear, shall live for ever happily with Christ; and that, therefore, whatever duty they are called upon in this world to perform they should discharge it with a cheerful, patient, and courageous spirit. Onward, then, beloved soldiers of Christ—expose yourselves to this danger, not to win earthly riches nor honour, nor glory, but that you may obtain a crown from Him, who, when death to the body has come, will surely bestow the reward of eternal life on those who love Him. All have to die at one time or

another—although there be a different mode of death to each; but as regards us here, death is inevitable if the coming day, which is now fast approaching, should discover us in our present position. Then, indeed, the Turks would fall upon us, and annihilate us to the last man. There is not one of us—no, not a single man, who could escape alive. Onward, then, brave soldiers, and as you ascend those ladders, offer up your souls to God—feel that you are animated with the charity of God—prepare to lose your lives for the love of your friends.”

The Prince Bohemond, perceiving there was hesitation amongst the Crusaders, determined then himself alone to ascend. A scaling ladder was attached to the rope which Feroz had thrown down, and upon that mounted the valiant Prince of Tarentum, and no sooner had he reached the top, and as he stepped from the ladder, placed his hands upon the battlements, than Feroz caught hold of the hand, and recognizing who was before him, exclaimed with fervour—“Blessed be this hand now and for evermore.” He then helped the Prince to descend, and his first act was to conduct him to the spot on the ramparts where lay the soldier slain by him, and to point to the dead body as a proof of his resolution to fulfil the promise he had given, and of his sincere attachment to the cause to which he had now devoted himself.

Bohemond embraced Feroz, and then turning back, he in a low tone of voice assured his followers below that they might ascend with perfect safety. They did not do so with the alacrity he had hoped for, as the Crusaders beneath still feared that some treachery

was intended against them, and therefore Bohemond quitted the tower, and descended on the same ladder by which he had mounted.

Upon reaching the ground Bohemond thus addressed the Crusaders in a commanding voice:—

“On, Crusaders, on to the scaling ladders—and for ever free yourselves from that one great cause of disquietude which has so long afflicted you. Courage! courage! valiant soldiers! mount, I say, the scaling ladders. To delay now would be dishonour; because now it is in your power to take the city of Antioch; the capture of which has been so long desired by you. That great city which, up to this time, has been subject to the Turks, shall now be yours, shall now, God willing, now and henceforth, be subject to the sway of Christians.”

The first of the Crusaders to yield obedience to the command, and to act in accordance with the wishes of Prince Bohemond, was a young warrior named Govel of Chartres. As an eagle flies with food to its young, so mounted with ease, with lightness and with speed, the youthful Govel. High and buoyant, ascending in the air, that brave youth of noble birth was instantly perceived, who from his boyhood had ever sighed to win a worthy renown—a youth who did not prize life for its own sake, but who only wished to live, in order that he might be able to perform acts worthy of the praise of good men.

The example thus given was speedily followed. Some of those who now mounted were followers of Duke Godfrey, some of Count Robert of Flanders, some of Prince Bohemond, whilst Feroz stood on the

wall willingly aiding each to descend from the battlements on the ramparts. Soon then there were to be seen on the tower, or mounting upon ladders, soldiers armed with helmet and hauberk, girt with swords, and each carrying a spear in his left hand, whilst with his right he grasped the ladder by the aid of which he was mounting. And thus ascended the first detachment to the number of five-and-twenty Crusaders.

But when these had reached the tower, a panic fell upon those whose duty it was to have followed them. The second detachment waited to see what would be the fate of the first, and then finding that their ascent was followed by a dead silence, they feared that their companions had been set upon and murdered, and believing this they declined following the brave example that had already been given to them.

The soldiers who had ascended the tower, suspecting the cause of the delay, and perceiving that some who were about to mount had withdrawn from the ladders, now leant over the battlements, and in suppressed tones bid their friends beneath be of good cheer, to come after them quickly, for that no treachery was to be apprehended, and no danger to be incurred.

The moment that these exhortations were heard, there was a universal rush made by the whole body of the Crusaders who stood beneath the tower, to mount up to its battlements. Emulation took the place of fear, and they struggled one with another who should be the first to ascend, and whilst they, who before hesitated now hurried to get upon the

ladders, these, unable to bear the weight, first bent, and then broke, for the old decayed ramparts failing to hold the hooks and ropes by which the ladders were upheld, numbers were dashed to the earth, or the men fell upon the points of the lances which rested against the walls, or were struck by the stones which had been unloosened from the ramparts, and so here were many Crusaders slain upon the spot or mortally wounded, being transfixed with spears, or miserably crushed by the descending stones.

This unforeseen accident excited the apprehension which had but the moment before been allayed, because they attributed the accident to treachery on the part of the Turks, and yet, in the midst of that awful suspense, with bitter pains and thrilling agony endured by the dying and the wounded, and the suspicion of a foul stratagem, by which their own lives, and those of their companions, were so jeopardized, still there was no cry from the Crusaders to denote that pain was felt, that disasters had occurred, or that doubt and dismay were pervading their ranks.

In the midst of all these various events Feroz remained steady and unshaken in his resolution. Perceiving the cause of the accident that had happened, he had hooks, and cords, and ladders again attached to the walls, and then boldly called upon the doubting, the timid, and the irresolute, to come up to him, assuring them he had secured them against the possibility of a similar calamity occurring. The exhortation of Feroz, and the invitation of those Crusaders who were already in the tower, produced the desired effect upon the rest, and at last there was placed upon the tower and its adjacent ramparts, not less than six hundred valiant Christian warriors.

At the time that these Crusaders had thus secured themselves in the Round Tower, one of the soldiers of Baghi Sian advanced towards them. This man bore in his hand a lighted torch ; but the instant he came within reach of a Crusader's sword, that instant his head was struck off, and then a body of Christians, proceeding with the torch he carried to the next tower, entered it, and finding the guards asleep, at once put them to death, and so the Crusaders hurried on from tower to tower, until at last they had slain the guards, and got possession of no less than ten towers of the city of Antioch. Without noise, without tumult, without the sound even of a conflict, all the Turkish soldiers were slain, and the Crusaders had now only to consider in what manner they could most readily admit the remainder of the Christian army, who stood in battle array outside the walls.

The sound which was to denote the moment when Duke Godfrey of Bouillon, Robert of Flanders, with knights and horsemen, might enter the city, was to be the loud braying of a trumpet. The Crusaders, breaking open the passage which had formerly been a gateway, at the bottom of the Round Tower, now standing outside the walls, at last sent forth the loud joyous trumpet's clangour, to apprise their associates of their success.

At that long-wished-for, long-looked-for, long-prayed-for signal, in came horsemen and footmen, princes, knights, and squires through the wide breach that had been thus made for them, and as they did so, they filled the air with one universal shout—"God wills it ! God wills it !"

The Turks, aroused by this sudden and unexpected

vociferation, mingled as it was with the notes of trumpets and horns, started from their sleep, and hurriedly took up arms, and grasping their bows and arrows, sought to defend the towers of which they still remained in possession. Then began a fierce and desperate battle between the Christians on the walls and the Turks who were still within the towers not yet conquered. Hearing the clamour that was thus arising from that part of the city gained by the Crusaders, the soldiers of the citadel, under the immediate command of Baghi Sian, sounded their horns, to arouse the Turks who were still unapprised of their danger in other parts of Antioch, so that they might, now that the first dawn of day was breaking, hasten to the assistance of their comrades, and help them to repel the Christians.

The same horrid sounds and dreadful noises that aroused the Turks, brought joyful tidings to the Christians, as yet unapprised of the attack contemplated upon Antioch; they therefore girt on their armour, and with banners raised, speeded on their way to the city. But whilst the battle was raging between Crusaders and Turks on the walls, the ramparts, and the battlements of the towers, the few Christians who were in the city, and had not been arrested, hurried to the gates, and opening all they could approach, left wide and numerous passages for the whole of the Christian army to enter, and all felt that it was now their duty to hurry towards the scene of the engagement, because daylight had now arrived, and all could perceive the signal of Bohemond's success, his blood-red banner waving from every tower of which he had become master. It was

the signal to show, that, through the mercy of God, a city which had been inexpugnable to mere man alone, had now fallen into the hands of the Prince of Tarentum and faithful Christians.

The Christians, in their encampment, pointed with exultation to the wished-for signal, and then all in arms rushed towards the gates, which lay wide open, inviting them to enter. Through these gates the whole multitude of Crusaders poured in living torrents of armed men; and as they entered there arose an awful acclamation and tremendous clamour, for then there filled the air, as with a horrid din, the clashing of weapons, the neighing of horses, the shouting of men, and the braying of trumpets, so that as the affrighted Turks listened, their limbs trembled with fear. Some in their despair took up arms, resolved to defend themselves to the last in the towers, or in such other posts as had been assigned to them, whilst others rushed out in the highways, and slew all the Christians they met, armed or unarmed, men, women, and children. For a time the battle seemed to rage in all parts of the city, as there was a combat in many mansions, and a conflict in every street. The fury of war seemed to have seized on all, and in the blindness and madness of its rage to strike at all it encountered. There raged for some time an indiscriminate carnage, until at last those who were Christians, inhabitants of Antioch, made themselves known to the Crusaders by repeating the "Kyrie Eleison," or some other words indicative of their faith, which rendered them easily distinguishable from the Turks. The Turks fought with a desperate bravery, but their bravery was equalled and their

numbers soon surpassed by those of the Christians, to whom each minute was now bringing a fresh accession of force.

At last the Turks fled in all directions. They were hunted down in the squares, in lanes, and at last in houses, and wherever they were met with or overtaken, they were slain without mercy. In the carnage of the Turks, the Syrians, Armenians, and Greek Christians, inhabitants of Antioch, took a conspicuous part. They aided the Crusaders by opening the gates for them, and when they had gained admittance pointed out the places in which the Turks were seeking refuge, or endeavouring to defend their lives. They felt that the time had come when they might exact a heavy and full revenge for all the wrongs that had been done them, all the miseries they had endured, and all the oppressions to which they had been exposed; and now they determined not to spare those who never had shown pity or mercy to them. Everywhere there was massacre, everywhere mourning, everywhere plunder. The streets were strewed with the dead, and in that one day alone it is believed there were not less than ten thousand persons slain in Antioch. In what various modes these ten thousand men were slain it would be cruel to narrate.

As to the amount of spoil taken by the Christians it is not in our power to tell; sufficient is it to say, that the reader may fancy what amount he pleases, and the reality, he may be sure, would be found to surpass what he had estimated.

And such is the true history of the capture of Antioch by the first Christian Crusaders, as it is nar-

rated in the veritable pages of the ancient chroniclers, Robert, Raimond, Guibert, Albert of Aix-la-Chapelle, Ralph of Caen, and William, Archbishop of Tyre.

CHAPTER XIX.

IBRAHAM AND GODFREY OF BOUILLON.

It was still night—but it was night whose gloom was momentarily breaking up in the first grey, though scarcely perceptible approaches of the coming morning, when Baghi Sian was startled from a profound sleep by feeling an intensely cold hand laid upon his own, as he rested in his chamber. At first, so deep had been the sleep in which his senses had been buried, that he was unable to recognize who it was that had presumed thus to disturb him, and when he did observe those he regarded as intruders, his first impulse was to seize the scimitar which lay beneath his pillow and at once put them to death; for he saw before him the old magician, and the Ismaëlian Turk, Selim.

The old man noted the action of Baghi Sian, and read his murderous purpose in the angry glances of his fierce eyes.

“Reserve your rage, your weapon, and your strength for those foes who are now seeking your life,” said the old man.

“Villains! audacious villains! how came you here? but you shall bitterly repeat this insolence.

Ho! guards, arrest these miscreants—guards, I say,” continued the furious Baghi Sian.

“The guards in the citadel are like the guards on the ramparts, or like to the ruler of Antioch, a few moments since asleep when they should be on the alert, and the only sound that can now awake them to consciousness and death is the Crusaders’ cry—*God wills it*”—said the old man, with bitter scorn, as he looked upon Baghi Sian, who still remained in the same attitude of repose from which he had been aroused.

“Speak—man—speak, if thou valu’st thy life, why art thou *here*? How camest thou *here*? What means this intrusion?” asked Baghi Sian, confounded at the audacity of the old man.

“I come here,” answered the magician, “to claim my just reward—the ruby-gemmed vases which you first promised and then refused to give me. I told you there was a plot to take Antioch this very night. I told you the truth. The Crusaders are now masters of the three Round Towers; I saw them on the walls; marching from tower to tower, and slaughtering the sleeping guards as they went. I have followed in their track, and have left them engaged in the work of death, in the hope I might arouse you in time. Up, man, and save your own life at least; or lie there, as you are, and be butchered like a skulking craven in your couch. Ha! listen if you will—not to my words,—but to the groans of your dying soldiers. Ha! there again—there was a shriek to awake the dead. He who has uttered that cry will never again speak. Listen if you will. If such a sound, from one of your own soldiers, is music that can

soothe you into sleep again, I am sorry I disturbed your slumbers."

The words of the magician were so strange, the tidings he conveyed so unlooked for, the tale itself so dreadful and so horrible, that Baghi Sian doubted for a moment whether he was sleeping or waking. He felt as if all this were a terrible dream; he lay half-hoping that it was so; because the truth, if it were the truth, was but the precursor of his own unavoidable destruction.

"Holy Prophet!" he exclaimed, "can this indeed be the fact? but, ah! there is another yell of agony; and there—there is the clashing of swords. Oh! terrible! terrible! it is, it must be the truth."

As he spoke these words he started from his couch to the floor, grasping his scimitar, and trembling as if he were a coward.

"What!" he said, "the city of Antioch surprised; and this, too, despite thy warning, and in contradiction to the opinion of the faithful Feroz."

"The faithful Feroz!" exclaimed the magician, "why Feroz is THE TRAITOR; it was *he* admitted the Christians into the Round Towers."

"Feroz! a traitor! Oh! impossible! impossible! thou wast not more anxious in warning me of this foul plot than he was earnest in asserting there was such a plot on foot."

"It was an excellent devise on his part," observed the old man, "to turn away suspicion from himself; but since I was so ignominiously dismissed from your presence yesterday, I have been acting a spy upon the Christians, and I now know not only that Feroz is the traitor, but *why* it is that he has betrayed

Antioch. It is in revenge for your conduct towards him."

"*My conduct!*" said Baghi Sian, as he arrayed himself in armour, aided by Selim, "I never did aught to injure him."

"The Turkish maiden you have been so long pursuing is the daughter of Feroz, and she has been twice saved from the hands of your minions by the Crusaders."

"Aye," added Selim, "and she has turned Christian, and she was concealed in the chamber of Feroz, as I truly told you."

The heavy, pallid hue of death overspread the features of Baghi Sian, as he heard this strange, unlooked-for intelligence. He had risen from his couch dismayed, but still a brave man. These tidings, however, told at such a time, and with the shrieks of his dying soldiers in his ears, made him a coward; for he felt in his heart he was about to suffer just punishment from heaven for his life of sin, and the unbridled indulgence of his passions. A sickening feeling came over him, and he leant for a few moments his head on the shoulder of Selim, as without that support he was conscious he must sink to the earth. "Treason, treason!" he murmured, "treason on all sides of me; and at last Antioch has fallen into the hands of my enemies; and then Ibrahim has joined with these plotters! I knew him to be base; but I never thought he could be false to the side which he was bound to defend as a soldier. Ha! what awful sound is that?" and the once dauntless Baghi Sian shook like a timid girl, because there appeared to arise on all sides of him the shrieks of wounded men, mingled with the shouts of pitiless victors.

"It is the clamour of the combat that is approaching us, as the Crusaders butcher the Turkish soldiers on the walls, or cast them headlong from the battlements. Why not order the trumpets of the entire garrison to sound, so as to arouse from their slumbers the soldiers in all parts of the city."

"Here is my signet ring—convey it to Ibrahim, and bid him do as you suggest. I have not strength to do anything," said Baghi Sian, as he cast himself at full length, and in armour, upon the couch from which he had a short time previously been aroused.

"I go to fulfil the command of your Highness," said the old man, who beckoned to Selim to approach him, and handing him a large leathern satchel, which he took from under his cloak, he whispered to his comrade in iniquity—"There, in that recess yonder you will find the richest articles: take nothing but gold: be particular in taking the two ruby-gemmed vases: I want the rubies for myself—mind, *I* must have every one of them."

Selim nodded assent.

"Take nothing but gold; and, if there be enough of them, nought but gemmed golden vessels; and let not your cupidity so mislead you as to take more than you can conveniently carry."

Selim again nodded assent.

"Didst feel his girdle when you were helping him on with it?"

"I did."

"What think you does it contain—golden coins or jewels?"

"Both," said Selim, rubbing his hands gleefully.

"We must share the contents of that girdle be-

tween us," said the old man; and as he spoke the words, the glance from the ravenous and relentless eyes of the two villains met, and they read in each other's souls the same thought—"We shall have that girdle, though to win it we must first dip our hands in the heart's blood of the wearer.

"Collect them now quickly," continued the old man, "for we know not the moment Ibrahim may enter here uncalled for. He is certain to return with me, in a few minutes, and that is the longest time you can have for selection; as to Baghi Sian, he will no more mind you than if he were a child. He has lost both head and heart, reason and resolution, by the news I have told him. Quick, Selim, to your task."

It was as the old man had said. Baghi Sian lay on the couch utterly prostrated by the overwhelming calamity that had overtaken him; and even the loud shrieking, with clamorous notes of the trumpets, as they brayed forth their hideous sounds of alarm and surprise, so as to waken up the soldiers in the four hundred towers of Antioch, were not sufficient to arouse the once proud, imperious, and daring ruler of Antioch from the stupor that had fallen upon him.

"Up!—up!—up!" cried Ibrahim, in full armour rushing into the room, and soon followed there by the magician—"up—Commander of Antioch—and slay those dogs, and all the traitors in the city, who now aid them, or who have helped them to seize upon a few of our towers. What! if they had gained the whole city, that is no reason the citadel should surrender to them. Come—come—come—Baghi Sian," said Ibrahim, as he stretched out his hand

to the Governor of Antioch, who still lay upon the couch. "Come, place yourself at the head of our horsemen—we have nought but footmen to contend against. Come—my valiant knights, like myself, are fully equipped. They wait but for you—and with a single charge we shall clear the streets of those reptiles."

"Thanks! thanks! Ibrahim," replied Baghi Sian. "The sound of battle inspires you now, as it ever before has done, with new ardour; as it always did myself until this moment; but I know not what is the matter with me; the sudden shock that has thrilled through me since that old man laid his icy hand upon me, to waken me from my slumbers—the dire news he told me, interrupted as it was, with shrieks of my own brave soldiers—all these circumstances have had such an effect upon me that I am, as it were, struck down with a mortal sickness; I have not strength to hold a sword, nor to level a lance—nay, I feel I could not even rein in my own war-horse."

The old man nudged with his elbow his associate villain, as Baghi Sian thus confessed his bodily weakness.

"You must, then" said Baghi Sian, "act for me; I entrust all to your skill and courage. I cannot participate in the combat; but from the ramparts I shall look down upon you in the battle—shall witness your feats of valour—and I trust I shall here receive you as the conqueror. Drive those dogs, the Christians, out of Antioch, and henceforth regard yourself as its ruler; my wealth is yours, and the power I hitherto have exercised shall be employed in accordance with your wishes."

"Enough," said Ibrahim; "you shall soon see here a victor over the Crusaders, or you shall never more see me living. Farewell!"

"Farewell!" replied Baghi Sian; and as he saw Ibrahim hastened from the chamber, he turned to Selim and said:—"Now help me to the battlements, in order that I may gloat my eyes with looking upon the carnage of the Christians. The sight of their blood, as it is shed by Ibrahim and my valiant knights, will probably restore to me the strength and courage of which I now feel myself to be deficient."

The bright broad light of day had come as Baghi Sian, the magician, and Selim took their places upon the battlements of the citadel, in such a position as they might witness the charge of Ibrahim upon the Christians, who were now seen in the streets of Antioch contending with the Turks, driving the infidels before them, and whenever the latter were dispersed following them in flying parties. At such a moment, the gates of the citadel were thrown open, and out poured, in one compact body, eight hundred horsemen, headed by the fierce Ibrahim, and as they dashed forward, a lance transpierced, or a sword cut down the Christian soldiers in their way, and in a moment afterwards the aspect of affairs was changed, for the Christians now were retreating in all haste, but were overtaken as they ran and mercilessly slaughtered, whilst the shouts of the Turks rose loud and triumphant in the air. The broad wide street leading from the citadel to one of the city gates was thus cleared from bottom to top of Crusaders—and the cross they wore was trampled upon by the horse's hoofs of Ibrahim's conquering knights.

Baghi Sian shouted with joy, when he saw what wondrous success had attended the charge of Ibrahim. He was still crying "Victory! victory!" when he beheld the city gates thrown wide open, and recognized the banners of Godfrey, of Robert of Flanders, and Bohemond, amidst the lances of the horsemen, as they cantered into the city.

At this sight there was a dead pause between the combatants. Ibrahim was seen to call in his followers from the pursuit of the fugitives, and to arrange his horsemen, in close, compact order.

A somewhat similar disposition of the forces under his command was observed by Godfrey of Bouillon. As his knights poured through the gate, they filled up the wide street to its utmost extent on both sides, and then horseman succeeded to horsemen at fixed paces from each other, so as to avoid confusion in the coming charge.

The difference between the order of battle with the Christians and the Turks was, that the former stood more widely apart, and the latter, who were by far more numerous, stood in close order together, so that they might the better resist the charge of their adversaries, and by resisting break their line, and then have them at disadvantage.

There was a pause, as if by common consent, whilst the leaders on both sides arranged their men for the deadly conflict.

Baghi Sian knew well what an awful struggle was now impending, for he had often witnessed, and never saw effectively resisted, a sweeping charge of Christian chivalry. He held his breath, as he heard the vivacious cheer from the ranks of the Crusaders of

"God wills it," whilst they set their lances at rest, and came with full speed against the opposing mass of Turkish cavalry. Down came with an awful burst upon Ibrahim and his men the Christian knights, with their shields covering their breasts, and their lances outstretched before them. There was a clash—a shriek, and then the agonized neighing of horses, as they were with their riders cast to the earth, and the Christian knights drove raging through them, breaking up and driving asunder what a moment before had seemed to be a compact mass of plated steel and iron helmets—and as the Christian knights broke through, they turned again upon their assailants, and then commenced an awful combat hand to hand with swords, as the horsemen rode at each other.

Even far away as they were from the scene of the engagement, there was one of the Crusaders conspicuous beyond all the rest, for the havoc he was making with his mighty arm, and his fearful sword. That man was Godfrey of Bouillon. It was observed by Baghi Sian, Selim, and the magician, that whenever the arm of Godfrey was uplifted, it was followed by the disappearance of a Saracen knight, and they perceived, which ever way he turned, down fell a slain or wounded man before him, until at last there was a wide space around him; and into that space they saw the gigantic Ibrahim ride, and at once rush at Godfrey of Bouillon.

"Ha!" said the old man, "now will be indeed a combat. The fall of one or other of these warriors will decide the fate of the day."

"Their courage is equal—their strength alike—

but Ibrahim wears the stronger armour; Godfrey has only scale armour, whilst Ibrahim is clothed from head to hip in thick plated steel," observed Selim.

"Aye! and Ibrahim is the better horseman of the two," said Baghi Sian. "See how he has made his horse prance round Godfrey, until he can get an advantageous blow at him—and—ha! now he has it. See, see, I can hear the clash of his sword; oh! Godfrey has parried it; but, see, Ibrahim's sword has actually cut away a part of Godfrey's shield, and he has fallen on the neck of his horse. It is the strong boss on Godfrey's shield has saved him, for the moment, from being cut down through shield and helmet."

"Oh! disastrous day," exclaimed Selim; "Ibrahim must be slain! I noticed Godfrey rise from the blow, and as Ibrahim was passing, strike him on the back of the neck, and, as it appeared to me, the sword passed sheer through the plated steel as if it were nought more than parchment. But hush! what an awful shriek! and see—see the whole body of Turkish knights are dispersed; they run on all sides, and they seem to be flying from something more terrible than lance or sword of Crusaders. Oh! horrible! horrible! who ever heard or thought of such a sight as *that*?"

And as Selim spoke the words, he pointed to something in the streets below him, and the instant Baghi Sian looked upon it, he shrieked with terror, and fell senseless to the earth.

The sight was an awful one. Onward came rushing to the open gate of the citadel, and mad evidently

with terror, the furious war horse of Ibrahim, bearing upon its back a portion of the body, and the legs of its rider, which, being all covered with steel, retained their position as if they had belonged to a living man; the head, shoulders, neck and chest had been severed from the body by a single blow struck by the sword of Godfrey of Bouillon. An awful blow! and such as, if it were stated in a romance, would be deemed an invention; but that such a blow was given is attested by Robert the monk, and all the ancient chroniclers of the Crusaders.

The mangled remains of Ibrahim seemed to lead the runaway Turkish knights, who came tumbling back in wild disorder, each man being desirous to save himself from the arm which had the strength so to cut through steel, and to overthrow the mightiest and bravest amongst them.

It was in the midst of the shrieks of terror-stricken men, the groans of the wounded, and the distinct shouts of the victorious Crusaders, that Baghi Sian was restored to consciousness. He looked around him—his guards were no longer at their posts, and the only persons in attendance upon him were two strangers, who a few hours before would have been liable to punishment if they had unnecessarily intruded upon his presence.

“Antioch is lost!” exclaimed the disheartened Baghi Sian. “Antioch is lost! What is to be done?”

“In two hours from this time,” said the old man, winking at Selim, “the Crusader who cut Ibrahim in two, as if he and his steel armour were as soft as a wax candle, will be within this chamber. His vic-

torious soldiers are even now entering the front gate of the citadel, and cutting off the heads of every one they meet. Your only resource, then, is, if you can, to escape."

"But how escape?" asked Baghi Sian; "the moment I am seen in the streets of Antioch I shall be at once recognized by the enraged Christians, and not merely put to death, but most probably tortured. Better, if I am to die, to die by the hands of a brave knight like Godfrey or Bohemond, rather than be butchered, as I should be, by a vile Assyrian, or contemptible Greek. No—no—no—there is no means of escape for me."

"But there is a mode of escape," said the old man, again winking at Selim, "if you will adopt it."

"Name it, I am prepared to act upon it."

"This, then, it is—divest your legs and feet of the steel with which they are now covered, conceal your robes beneath this ragged cloak of a beggar, let the hood fall over your head, come with us out by the postern gate, which has not yet been reached by the Crusaders; once outside the city, I can lead you, by a mountain path, to the Camp of Corbohan; once there, you are safe, and in a few days you may return with his army to see Antioch invested, to be captured from the Christians, and you yourself restored to the dignity of its governor."

"Thanks! thanks!" said Baghi Sian, as he flung around him the ragged cloak which the old man presented to him. "Come! come! I am anxious to be away from the sound of this horrid din. I know not how to thank you and your friend for your kindness."

"You may feel assured that *when* we part from you, you never will complain of the treatment you have experienced at our hands. On, on, your highness, I have provided a mule for you, as you are not accustomed to tread a rugged mountain path with naked feet. Oh! we shall take *such* care of you!

And as he said the words, the old man again winked at Selim, as they followed the hurried steps of the trembling tyrant.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DARK WELL.

BAGHI SIAN had escaped from Antioch. Disguised in the robes of a beggar, and mounted upon a mule, he was led by a rugged path which ran along a mountain side for about five miles from the city. The pathway then dropped precipitously down into a deep, dark valley, crowded with trees, through which it wound, in many a turn, until it at length reached a little lake, or rather well, supplied by a thin, noisy stream, that came plashing and foaming along the hill side. The small lake or well spread out from the rocks down which the stream descended to the distance of about thirty yards, and the depth of two or three feet; and out of this shallow water there arose huge blocks of black rocks, which, to those acquainted with the locality, served as an entrance to a cavern in the side of the hill, but to which there was no access but by wading through the water.

Viewed from the pathway, there was no mark or sign of any sort to indicate that there was any place of concealment behind the rocks, the black, coal-like colour of which gave to the collection of waters from whence they arose, the name of "the dark well."

For three miles of the road on which he had been travelling, no other thought occurred to the mind of Baghi Sian than *how* he might best secure his escape from Antioch; and the shouts and shrieks, which occasionally came borne upon the wind towards him, added to his anxiety to speed upon his way; whilst the thought of the horrid spectacle of Ibrahim's horse, bearing the bleeding body and legs of his master, seemed to increase his terrors, and to chill his heart with the new and hitherto unknown sensation of fear.

These feelings, however, gradually abated the farther he withdrew from the city; and for the last two miles of the road, new reflections rose to his mind, and fresh subjects of anxiety began to engross his thoughts. The old man, the magician, had paced at the head of the mule on which he rode, never for one instant, from the time they had set forth, letting go the bridle rein, whilst Selim walked close behind him, and he remarked that the solemn stillness of the solitary mountain path was never once broken by them. They never spoke to each other, nor to him; but he saw, or fancied he saw, upon suddenly raising his head, and shaking away the confusing thoughts that gathered like a mist around his brain, that there were secret signs passing between them.

At length, and it was as if a sudden flash of

light had crossed his sight, a horrid suspicion took possession of him. What could be the object of these men in taking him away from Antioch? What had *he* ever done of good to either of them that they should risk *their* lives to save *his*? If they did not intend to serve, then their *purpose* must be to *injure* him? Then why should *they* seek to take away his life, when they had but to leave him where he was, in Antioch, and he would be sure to be deprived of it by the *victorious Crusaders*?

And then followed the reflection—was his life in danger in the *citadel* of Antioch? True, the city had been captured; but the citadel was constructed to overawe the city, and to resist, if it were necessary, a revolt of citizens. It was manned by the best of his cohorts. It was safe; it could hold out until Corbohan came to its relief. Would he not be more safe in the midst of his own brave soldiers, than in those lonely mountains at the mercy of two strangers? And then he remembered the words the old man had used—the falsehood he had told of the Crusaders having gained the citadel—that which he now knew not which to be true, for whilst he was still two miles away from Antioch, he had observed, on looking back, towards the city, his own flag still flying from the towers of the citadel.

And then came the terrible thought—*why* had he been enticed out of a place where he had been safe, to be left alone in the power of those two strangers? And when he asked himself that question, he remembered that he had had dealings with both the men who walked at that instant *before* and *behind* him; that he had excited in the hearts of both a

thirst for gold; that both had earned the rewards he had promised them; that both had been unjustly treated—both disappointed—both driven from his presence with scorn—and both knew that in his girdle was always to be found what would more than compensate them for their disappointment; and when this reflection occurred to his mind, then he penetrated their plot—*they were leading him to the first convenient spot where they could rob and murder him.*

He might, at the worst, have died a soldier's death, like Ibrahim: he might, by his example, have inspired the defenders of the citadel with fresh courage; or, all failing, he might have headed them in a desperate charge, and expired amid the heap of Christians he had slain. He might have died in a manner worthy of his former life, as a warrior; whereas, he was walking tamely and quietly like a beast to the shambles—to be butchered by two base villains—to fall unknown, and to fall unavenged!

"No—not unavenged at least," thought the wretched man, as he felt for his dagger and scimitar—"not whilst these good weapons are within my reach shall my foeman be able to boast of an easy victory;" and he smiled, as he was wont to do, on going to the battle-field when he felt his arms were safe and by his side.

The action and the grim smile of Baghi Sian did not escape the observation of the magician, who on the instant, and for the first time, let go the rein of the mule, and said, "This pathway leads direct down to a well; it will be necessary to give the mule a drink, and we may all then stop and refresh our-

selves, I have some provisions with me. Proceed, if your Highness pleases, as I shall be able to overtake you before you reach the well."

Baghi Sian nodded to the magician as he passed him on the path, and the magician bowed his head in humility, in response to the courtesy thus paid to him. But in their steady gaze each knew the other thoroughly. They saluted as gladiators in the amphitheatre were wont to salute before they crossed their swords in a struggle, sure to terminate with the death of one or the other, and, not improbably, of both.

"Selim," said the magician, "there is no necessity for any further disguise. That miserable fool has, at last, seen through our plot. It is what I wished, because I desire him to feel the bitterness of death before it comes upon him. I purposely remained silent, in order to *force* him to think—to see—to feel—to know that he is in *our* power—that he depends for existence, aye, for every additional moment he breathes, upon two men, that but a few hours ago, he spurned from him as dogs, and that now, if he were restored to power, he would delight to see impaled. Oh! it is delicious to behold the proud Baghi Sian—one of the great ones of the earth—to see him who but yesterday styled himself ruler of Antioch, lord of Syria and Phœnicia, terror of Assyria, most potent of Eastern princes, second in command to the Soldan himself, to see him down upon his knees, and begging from the beggar for his life. Oh! is not that a glorious revenge? Is it not an exhilarating thought to think that you can force that much from him?"

"Humph! perhaps it is," answered Selim, "but I want to force nothing from him but his jewels, his gold, and his life."

"Ah! I forgot," said the old man, "all you wish for is to have wealth in this life, and by a thrust of your dagger to win paradise in the next."

"Exactly," said Selim, "and therefore when we get to the well, I am for cutting his throat—dividing the spoil fairly between us—hiding it in the cavern in presence of each other, so that none but ourselves shall know where it is hidden, and then separating—I to my habitation to see how matters are going on with Zara and the captive, and then to the camp of Swein, and you to—where?"

"To the camp of Carbohan, to apprise him of the capture of Antioch and the death of Baghi Sian. I shall certainly be the first with such tidings," said the magician, with a malignant grin. "But hurry on; see that you disarm Baghi Sian as he dismounts; if not, I can tell you, he will make a desperate battle for his life. I saw *that* in his eyes. Do not kill him, however, the instant you have disarmed him. You can put him to death when you like—but oblige me by not doing so until I give the signal; it will be the words, *Allah! be praised!*"

Selim nodded assent, and taking from his feet the heavy wooden solid sandals he had until then been wearing, he bounded with light and noiseless steps behind Baghi Sian, and as he reached the well, caught him in his arms, and placed him on the ground; as he did so he tore away the beggar's cloak, and with it the sword from the sheath, and the dagger from the girdle; and as he performed this

piece of dexterity, he bowed his head low to the governor, and with a sneering accent said, "Your Highness, disguise is no longer necessary here."

"So I perceive," said Baghi Sian, as he looked around him, and saw that the spot in which he stood was closed on every side by rocks, trees, and steep hills.

It was a place that seemed by nature formed for the perpetration of some desperate deed—where no cry for mercy could be heard, and where villainy, unchecked, might practice its worst and most diabolical acts.

As Baghi Sian looked and marked how silent and how solitary was all around him, and then thought of the two men who had brought him there, his left hand caught at the sheath of the scimitar, and his right ascended to his girdle—the sheath was empty! the dagger was gone!

"Oh! base and cowardly thief!" said Baghi Sian, "thou hast disarmed me, whilst pretending to aid me in alighting from my mule."

"I feared," said Selim, "your Highness might lay violent hands on yourself, and therefore I have taken charge of your weapons."

"Liar, as well as coward," said Baghi Sian, "I am sure thou hast brought me here to murder me. Come—do thy base hangman's work at once, for life is a burthen to me. I am unfit to live, when I could be the dupe of such a cozening knave as thou."

"Do not be in a hurry," answered the phlegmatic Selim, "you may be sure I will murder you when I am desired to do so; but not a moment sooner."

The magician listened to this conversation, and

was grievously disappointed by it. He had seen the governor of Antioch give way to womanish fears, and for a time the helpless victim of a panic; but the magician forgot that such a circumstance was contrary to the usual habits of Baghi Sian's life—that the manner in which he had been aroused from his slumber, the awful shrieks, and the horrid, unlooked for manner of Ibrahim's death, were calculated to shake the strongest nerve; that these events had now passed away; that daylight had come; and the desperate extremity in which he was placed was now well known to Baghi Sian, and though he could not avert it by his courage as a soldier, yet the spirit and the resolution which formerly characterized him still remained, and enabled him to encounter it with all the bravery and self-possession of a man. The magician had not calculated upon this. He had hoped to have seen Baghi Sian crawling on his knees, and asking for his life; he saw no such thing; on the contrary, he saw him standing erect and looking as scornfully down upon himself and Selim, as if he were still seated in the citadel of Antioch, and could summon his guards to hurl them both over the battlements. The magician was enraged and disappointed at this; and as he could not humble he was determined to afflict the heart of Baghi Sian for the few moments he intended still to let him live.

“Come, Selim,” said the magician, “let us prepare for our repast. I promised his Highness he should have some *refreshment* at the dark well, which now spreads its shallow waters before him. Our fare is poor; but then it will gratify his Highness to know, that as we expected to have him here to dine with

us, we selected for the occasion, and in his honour, our finest golden plate. Come, Selim, be quick, open the satchel; let me see what taste you have in the selection of plate; and above all, let me look at those glorious rubies in the golden vases, which his Highness promised to give me, but preferred to violate his word rather than part with them."

As the magician was thus speaking, Selim loosed the leathern thong of the satchel, and out rolled upon the earth the richest ornaments that had the day before decorated the banquet table of the governor of Antioch; and as the bright red gold glittered on the earth before them, the two villains, in their admiration of it, forgot for an instant their thirst for blood. Selim threw himself on his knees to handle the precious articles, whilst the magician snatched up the ruby-gemmed vases he had coveted, and in his delight in recovering them, kissed them with his odious and polluted lips.

Baghi Sian, on the instant, recognized his property. He saw that his death was determined upon, and although all was silent around him, yet there was one chance—hopeless it might be—but still the only, and the last chance for his life; and that was to run from the wretches whilst they were so engaged, and as he ran to cry for "help." The moment the thought occurred to him, he put it into execution, and Selim was still on his knees, when he heard the valley filled with the shrieking cries of Baghi Sian.

"Help! help! murder! murder! help! help! murder! murder! murder! murder! mur——"

Selim had overtaken the victim, and one blow of his sword had served to cut nearly the leg in two.

Baghi Sian fell to the earth, but still his cry was
“murder! murder! murder!”

The sword of Selim passed through his body.

“Murder! murder! help!” still cried Baghi Sian.

“*Hilloa!*” cried a voice in the distance.

“Here! here! help! help!” cried Baghi Sian, as his body still writhed in agony, with the sword of Selim in his vitals.

“*Hilloa!* down to the dark well, soldiers; there some foul deed is doing,” was uttered in a loud voice from the top of the hill.

Baghi Sian lay motionless. The sound had not reached his ear. Selim again stabbed him as he lay, and then as he ran gave a desperate thrust to the mule, and the affrighted animal darted away through the forest trees, whilst he and the magician plunged into the waters of the well, rushed behind the projecting rocks, and then hid themselves in the cavern.

The two villains had scarcely time to conceal themselves, when there came pouring down the hill opposite to that on which they had been travelling, a band of Christian soldiers.

A cry of horror from those who first saw the bleeding body of Baghi Sian, brought their companions and commander round them.

“*Hilloa!*” said the commander, looking down upon the dead body, “how came this unhappy infidel here? and how grandly he is dressed too! his girdle, be sure of it, has some precious things in it, I warrant. I say, Alfred, unloose it. What! gold and diamonds! such sparkling diamonds, too! We are in rare luck to-day, my men; and see, what glittering things are those, yonder? fetch them hither, lads. What! gold

plate, too! ha! here are two precious vases. What think you, my men, of presenting these to the Lady Gunhilda? She is sure to place them on some altar, and devote them to God's service. The rest shall be divided amongst you. But who can this be who possessed such treasures? Let me look, Alfred. As I am a Crusader, as sure as my name is Hugh, *this* is Baghi Sian, the supreme ruler of Antioch. I suppose he was set upon by the peasantry hereabouts, and the fellows were frightened by his cries for help. Fools! they have left behind them what will make every man of us rich for the remainder of our days. I should like to see the warrior, Turk, Emir, or Assyrian, who would now claim a right to take from *us*, Crusaders, that which once belonged to our greatest foe, Baghi Sian. Ha! now I think of it. Alfred, cut off the head of that old Turk. It will be a pleasant sight in the Crusaders' camp. It is but a just judgment of Providence that he who has decapitated so many Christians should himself be at last left without his head. That is a good blow, Alfred. You would make a capital headsman. You have hit the joint of the neck with admirable dexterity. On, my men, *we* are now the richest Crusaders that ever won a portion of the enemy's spoil."

And with these words the Christian soldiers passed up the hill by which Selim, the magician, and their victim, had, not an hour before, descended.

The magician and Selim, as they lay hid in the cave, heard every word that had been spoken by the loud-voiced Hugh of York to his comrades.

When the cheers of the soldiers died away in the distance, the two villains crept from their conceal-

ment, and there was the bitterness and malignity of disappointed avarice portrayed in the face of each. They looked around. Not a vestige of the gold plate remained ! All that was before them was the headless body of Baghi Sian, and that body was without the rich girdle that had encircled it.

To obtain the girdle and the gold they had plotted ; they had risked their lives ; and now girdle and gold were irretrievably lost to them. Selim nodded farewell, and thought how he could recover from the magician what he conceived he had been deprived of through the old man's folly ; and the magician parted from Selim, suspecting he would soon make the attempt to carry into effect that project of despoiling him, which he was aware had been concerted between the Ismaëlian and the Greek.

CHAPTER XXI.

ALEXANDER OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

It was black midnight ; and in the dark cave attached to, or more accurately to describe it, lying underneath the beggar-dwelling of him who was known by the name of "the magician," was seated at a table on which were fruits and wine, Alexander the Greek. Hanging from the roof over his head, was a single flickering lamp, just throwing out sufficient light to illuminate the table at which he sat, and a narrow circle around him ; but leaving everything beyond that circle in profound obscurity.

The Greek was alone—had been sitting for some hours alone, and the only solace in his solitude was the wine on the table before him. From time to time he put down his hands upon his right leg, which was bandaged in thick cloths; and as he did so, a slight expression of pain escaped his lips, or he gave vent to his impatience by an execration.

“Curse on it!” he at last said, after swallowing at one draught a full goblet of wine, “this wine is as rapid and tasteless as water; it brings neither pleasure to the palate, joy to the heart, nor hilarity, to the brain. It will not allay, even for an hour, the aching agony of this unhappy leg, which, for the first time in my life, refuses to perform its office. Curses on it! but still greater curses on him—Bohemond of Tarentum, who has twiced marred my fortunes, when they were on the point of being amplified to the utmost extent of my wishes. What interest could he have had in that Turkish maiden, that he should have twice taken her from me and Baghi Sian? I escaped from his lance once by the purest accident, and this last time by a miracle. That fall he caused to the horse, the maiden, and myself, has left me, I fear, a cripple for life—for life!—life! Ah! at least life is left me. Had I remained on the ground but a few hours longer, this head, which now thinks for me, would long since have been a blackened mass of corruption, rotting with the heads of others—vile Turks too!—whom those brutal Crusaders decapitated, and placed on poles, a terror to the Antioch garrison, and a warning to them never again to molest the female portion of the encampment.

“Assuredly,” mused Alexander, “I should not now

be a living man, had the Christians discovered me in the spot to which I had rolled myself, when cast down by the wondrous blow struck by Bohemond.

“Ah! but for two minutes more, and I should now be the prime favourite in the court of Baghi Sian, making use of his endless treasures, duping him as I pleased, and revenging myself upon the sneering, insolent Ibrahim. Two minutes more, and the maiden was won beyond the possibility of recapture. Two minutes more, and I had been revelling in delights, instead of being as I am now—maimed, perchance, for life—miserable, alone dependant for my preservation, aye, even, for the moment, the very means of living, upon a charlatan-beggar, who calls himself a magician! A magician, forsooth! as if there were powers in nature reserved for the advantage of him, whose whole being is absorbed in the accumulation of wealth, and to add to that wealth cheats friend and foe alike. What! secrets to be at the command of him who is such a madman, that he will not enjoy what he possesses, nor use what is his own!

“To be a dependant upon him! why this is worse than ruined fortunes, deceived hopes, and bruised limbs. It is the very degradation of dishonour in its most disgusting form!

“How am I to free myself from my present position? Where is Selim? In what way can he now be engaged, that I have not seen him since we parted at the Christian camp? The first person I desired to see was Selim. In that hope, and despite of much pain and agony, I sought, in company with this wretched magician, for Selim in vain at his ruined fortress, and returned from my search with a throbbing brow and

an aching limb—doomed, as the malevolent old man told me, to many day's inactivity, before I may again put my foot to the ground.

I am absolutely helpless, and I believe, at least I now begin to suspect, it was with the intention to reduce me to this helpless condition that the magician not merely assented, but urged me to seek for Selim at his own habitation. And why seek to reduce me to this helpless state? Can he know that which Selim and I have so long plotted, and that he therefore is determined to mar by—can it be?—by taking my life?

“But why save my life, if he determined on depriving me of it himself? Why aid me to live, when he had but to leave me as I was on the battle-field, and the Crusaders would have despatched me?

“If he knew of Selim's plot and of mine, *then* why preserve me now? Why aid me here? Why conduct me on horseback afterwards to Selim's castle?

“If he *knew*, if *he* knew? How *could* he know? would Selim voluntarily tell that he engaged with me to take the old man's life, once we discovered where he had hidden all those precious stones that he has been a long life in accumulating?

“What would Selim gain by such a discovery? by a betrayal of me? What should I gain by betraying Selim? Nothing. The old man would not part with the secret of his diamond-treasure to save his own life. Then why expect as a reward from him that which he values more than life?

“I have no such expectation. Therefore I am true to Selim; and therefore is Selim, for the self-same reason, true to me.

“If the old man possesses secrets of nature, why does he not employ them for my benefit, and cure me at once, instead of doing as he has done—employing a certain and natural means, violent exercise on horseback—which was sure to increase the inflammation of a bruised leg?

“*Secrets of nature?* ha! now I think on it—I remember the old man warned me, that if he ever found me sleeping, he would compel me to disclose, in that state, the nature of the compact existing between Selim and myself, and of which he noticed an indication in this very cave.

“And what,” exclaimed Alexander, trembling in every limb with horror at the thought, “if unconscious of the fact myself, he has found me sleeping, and if he has the power of extracting secrets—and if—and if—why—*he did it* with Ibrahim! I saw it, heard it, know it. What he did with him he could do with me, and if he have done it, then—then I am a doomed man, if *I* cannot slay *him*.

But if he has found out *our* secret, why does he spare *me*? why has he spared *me*? Why not poison the fruit I eat—the wine I drink? Why not have despatched me before now?

“Why? Could it be that he wishes to exercise upon me some piece of diabolical cruelty?”

And as this thought occurred to the guilty man, the aching pain of his limb was forgotten, as the savour of the wine cup was destroyed.

“But why spare Selim, and punish me *alone*? Vain thought! if I am to be the victim, so will Selim, and perchance life is but preserved for me, until we are both together.

"If some such motive as this did not influence him, why so anxious to bring Selim and myself together ?

"Wherefore this anxiety in the breast of one who lives but for two objects—to gratify his avarice and to glut his revenge ?

"Ah ! I forget he has a deep desire for preserving the life of Selim. The old man regards Selim as an instrument in his hatred of Florine ; he knows of Selim's vow to take the life of her betrothed husband, Swein, and therefore to pain Florine will preserve Selim ; and when Selim has done his work, then despatch him, as he no doubt will despatch me, that is, if he has discovered our secret.

"But how, if he has not discovered the secret ; and, as yet, I have no reason for knowing that he has—then—ah ! then—but to see Selim, to whisper three words to him, and then the old man should lie a corpse at our feet, and all this painful agony of fear be at an end. Oh ! I would not endure another hour like the last for all the wealth of Baghi Sian.

"If my fears are true, I know how to be rid of them ; if vain, then I am afflicting myself unnecessarily, and now for another goblet of the old man's old wine."

Alexander poured out wine—tasted it—spat it out suddenly, and with a blanched and trembling lip, exclaimed : "It tastes strangely ; mayhap it is poisoned ; and I have been tasting, sipping, imbibing, nay, swallowing down whole draughts of the same wine for hours, and I am incurably poisoned, and hence that raging pain in this maimed limb, which feels, at times, as if it were plunged in fire."

"*In the wine* there is no poison, Alexander—the poison thou feelest is in thy blood—the poison thou drest of is in thine own diseased brain. There is no poison so deadly as the unjust suspicion of an unjust man against a friend. It kills kindness, and slays sympathy." Such was the greeting given in the hoarse, croaking voice of the old magician to the Greek, as he stepped noiselessly into the narrow circle of light which surrounded Alexander.

Alexander started at finding himself in the presence of the old man, upon whom his thoughts had been so long fixed—whose presence he now so much dreaded, and whose approaching footsteps his keen ear had been on the watch to detect. He felt, from the very manner in which the old man had, on this occasion, contrived to escape his vigilance, how completely he was in his power—how weak was he, in all the strength and vigour of manhood, to an individual who appeared from his sensility to be tottering on the very verge of the grave. True, he was wounded, and the old man hale in limb; but still the Greek preserved a subtlety of wit, with which he thought, or hoped, he might encounter the duplicity of his companion, if the latter were determined to play him false.

"Poisoned!" said the Greek. "Poisoned! Did I say poisoned, *Chatenay*, for that, I think, is the name in which you most rejoice."

"I rejoice in no name," gruffly answered the old man. "The time has not yet come for telling my real name; when it does, the world will remember it, when you, and generations of sensualists like you, are forgotten."

"I pray your pardon for offending you by disparaging your old wine ; but still, honest Chatenay, I maintain that it is poisoned."

"Indeed !" said the old man, in a voice which indicated surprise.

"Aye, indeed, and in truth, poisoned, most vilely poisoned by being drunk alone, beneath a solitary lamp, in a cold, dark cave. Why, the finest Falernian that Horace ever tasted, or the noblest Chian that Anacreon has immortalized in verse, would be soured into vinegar, or tasteless as the lees of a musty cask, if drunk as I have been drinking your good wine for the last two hours. Wouldst make your wine refreshing, life-inspiring, health-restoring, odorous, then give it to me in a chamber well-lighted, place roses on my couch, and bind my brows, like a true bacchanalian, with a garland of ivy leaves."

"I cannot bring to thee garlands, and roses, and wax lights, for I am but a poor old man, who have charge of all the worldly wealth of my brother beggars of the camp, and shall do my best to preserve it from the cupidity of *thieves* ; I mean no offence, Alexander, to thee, for thou livest upon the bounty of an emperor, and nought less than the rifling of the treasure chamber of the mighty Baghi Sian could content thee, or suffice to gratify thy wants and indulge thy luxurious tastes. Accident, and not thy choice, has made thee my guest, and I give to thee the best that my poor abilities can afford. Whilst thou hast been fretting here in this lonely, but still safe chamber, where Crusaders cannot reach thee, and the lance of Bohemond never touch thee, I have been exerting all my poor abilities to prepare for thee a dainty dish

such as thou hast never tasted before, and the like of which thou shalt never eat again. Here it is."

And as the old man spoke the words, he unfolded from a huge mass of cloths, with which it was surrounded and completely wrapped up, as if to preserve due warmth, a small silver dish, with a tight-fitting silver cover, which he placed on the table before the Greek, and having, for an instant, removed the top, so as to permit the fume to escape, he instantly closed it again.

The luxurious sensualist inhaled the rich odour that diffused itself around him, and his eyes glistened with delight, and he smacked his lips, exclaiming:—

"Most admirable Chateney! most exquisite of cooks! the dish is delicious—the spices exquisite. Is the meat tender? No doubt it is; but is it *quite safe for me* to eat of it?"

"Safe!" exclaimed the old man. "Oh! I see thou wast talking of poison a few minutes ago, and, perchance, thou fearest that the old man has prepared for thee some medicated stuff. Remove all such thoughts from thy mind. The cook does not fear to taste the food he has prepared. *This is my favourite dish*, and I give it to none but favourites. When my father was particularly well pleased with me, he always gave me a dish composed of *the very same materials* I now place before thee. Mark! how readily I eat of what I give to thee."

As the old man spoke the words he dipped a silver spoon into the dish, took from it an unctuous morsel, dripping with brown rich gravy, and swallowed it.

"I am content, Chatenay," said the Greek, "and now for our delicious meal. A spoon, Chatenay, if you please."

"Certainly," said the old man; "but what is this? a spot of rust on the spoon! Oh! I must give it *perfectly fit to be used by thee*."

And as he spoke these words, there was a diabolical smile upon his lips, as he rubbed, with marvellous energy and vigour, for a man of his age, the silver spoon in a green-coloured napkin.

Neither the demon grimace, nor the peculiar form of expression used by the old man were noticed by the Greek, as he sat inhaling with delight the odour that arose from the dish before him.

He seized the spoon, plunged it into the dish, and after taking half a dozen mouthfuls, he said—"How much this exquisite dish improves! each new morsel gives a fresh appetite; the first three, I confess to you, imparted a somewhat acrid taste to the mouth, but that I find disappearing with each new morsel eaten."

"Oh! you perceived an acrid taste, a slight burning on the tongue, did you, with the first mouthful especially?" said the old man.

"I did," replied the Greek.

"Ah!" said the old man.

"Anything wrong in that?" asked the Greek as he paused, and his lurking suspicions were again aroused.

"Oh! no, *I* think that was quite right," replied the old man; "but probably some iced wine would now be agreeable to you."

"Iced wine!" exclaimed the Greek, "oh! admirable! the very thing I was wishing for; it will aid in cooling my blood."

"No doubt it will," added the imperturbable old

man ; "but this goblet requires to be cleaned before new wine is poured into it." And as he spoke the words he rinsed out the goblet, poured some wine from a fresh bottle into it, and drunk it off, saying—"You see, Alexander, I taste of the wine as I did of the dish. There, take the bottle, *it is*, you perceive, *cold as death*. Hold it whilst I *rub well* this goblet for you." As he spoke the words, the same vigour and exertion were used as had been before displayed by the old man with the green napkin. "Now," he added, "thou canst fill for thyself."

Alexander poured out the wine, and he drank off the contents of the goblet at a single draught, imbibing the cooling liquid with all the animal delight of a person whose main satisfaction in life has been the gratification of his senses.

"Thy wine is good—a little acrid taste on it, to be sure—but that, I suppose, is the fault of my palate, not of the wine."

"Yes—your palate, I imagine, cannot *now* be in good order," replied the old man ; "but take more wine, and that taste will disappear, as it did with the dish."

"And so it has," said the delighted Greek, as he followed the directions that had been given to him. By Bacchus ! no better wine was ever tasted by Roman emperor in his richest banquets. And then this dish ; what would a Vitellius have given for it ! Chatenay, he would have made you—perpetual Consul of Rome. I pray you tell me of what it is composed ?"

"Hush ! for your life," said the old man, as he clutched with a firm grasp the throat of the Greek.

"I hear someone descending into the cave. It must be Selim. Does he know thou art *here*."

"No," replied the Greek; "but what if he did?"

"Wretch," said the old man, in a hollow whisper which thrilled the Greek with terror, "say but one word to denote thy presence to him, and this knife shall that instant be plunged into thy heart. Be silent, and I shall not touch thee. Be silent for thy life; and thou shalt witness what passes between us. Speak but one word—utter but one exclamation—and with your utterance this light is extinguished; he then will not know where to find you, but I shall: for I can see as well in the dark as when the sun is shining; and the next thing thou shalt feel, once thou hast spoken or stirred, is this knife in thy heart."

As the old man spoke these words, he brandished a sharp pointed glittering knife before the eyes of the terrified Greek, and then removing the lamp advanced up the cave as if to meet the person whose steps were heard approaching.

The old man walked about fifty yards from the place where the maimed Greek was seated. Alexander saw the magician deposite upon a table the lamp, and as he did so, attach a long thin twine to it, and then holding the twine in his hand, walk away to such a distance as to be completely beyond the reach of its rays, so that, except to Alexander, who was in complete darkness, and had an opportunity of watching his movements, he remained absolutely invisible.

Alexander felt the very hairs on his head rise with terror as he noted in that profound silence, and

complete darkness, the slow and heavy steps of some one approaching gradually towards the lamp, and his terror was increased when he observed Selim step within the circle of light. He noted that Selim stopped, as if utterly confounded, what he found no one sitting by the table on which was the lamp.

"What is the meaning of this?" said Selim, speaking aloud; "a lamp lighted, and no one near it; and then what can be the cause for this unearthly odour that prevades the cave? Can anything have befallen the magician, if he is here, or Alexander? I was sure I should find one or both at this hour. Perhaps they are within call. Chatenay! Chatenay! Alexander! Alexander! Alexander!"

The miserable Alexander would have given all the wealth he had ever wasted, to have said the single word "here," in reply to the call; but he observed the glittering knife, [and he perceived the magician had pulled the twine to its utmost tension, so that with the slightest touch the lamp upon the table would be upset.

"I shall sit down here, and await their coming," said Selim. "The lighted lamp shows that one or the other has been here lately, and most probably will soon return. Strange that Alexander should not be here. Where can the wily Greek have hidden himself? But—ugh! what an abominable, grave-like stench there is at this table. There is the smell of human flesh about it. And then these vapours—and this darkness—and this stillness. I feel an unaccountable heaviness growing upon me."

And as Selim was uttering the words, Alexander could observe that which was unseen by Selim,

namely, that the magician had fastened his basilisk eyes upon the Ismaëlian, and was even out of the darkness glaring upon him; and as the magician so stared upon his victim, he was clawing the air with his hands, in the same manner in which Alexander had noted the old man to proceed previously with the Turk, Ibrahim: and *then*—not gradually but suddenly, as if a flash of lightning had struck the victim, he saw Selim's eyes open wide, and staring like to those in the head of a corpse, which has met with a sudden death; and at the same instant the hand and arm on which Selim had been leaning his head relaxed, and the head rested upon them like to that of a man in profound sleep.

The magician advanced out of the darkness in which he had, up to that moment, remained, and came within the rays of the light, and as he approached still kept waving his hands at Selim. At length the action of the old man ceased. He took up the lamp and brought its burning flame close to the eyeballs of the sleeper, but the eye-lids never winked, and the eye remained staring, stolid, and rayless.

“He sleeps a sure sleep,” said the old man; “and now, Alexander, thou mayest call to him, loudly as thou wishest—he will not, cannot hear thee. No voice but mine can evoke a reply from him, and that reply his sleeping brain will ever remain unconscious of. His *spirit*, not his *mind*, shall answer me for the actions of the body, and the thoughts that have been resting in his memory shall come into activity at my call. The charm is strong upon him, and he cannot resist it; but there let him lie, in darkness that is befitting his own gloomy soul. I must bring the light

to thee, Alexander, for I have some rare things to show thee."

When the magician spoke these words he took up the lamp, and as he passed the sleeping Selim stopped, and, as if in derision of the helpless state in which Selim was then lying, turned the lamp on one side, so as to let some of the scalding oil fall on the cheek of the sleeper; and Alexander, to his horror, observed, that although the burning liquid left a red flaming trace as it ran along the visage, there was not a movement of limb, nor a quicker action of the breath, to indicate that any pain was experienced by the sleeper.

The magician and the light advanced towards Alexander, and as they did so, the body of Selim gradually disappeared into obscurity, and at length was lost to the eye of Alexander; it was as if swallowed up in utter darkness.

The magician placed the light on the table before Alexander, and, as he did so, addressed him in a voice that indicated no angry feeling. It was passionless as that of a judge, who, when condemning a criminal to death, shows that the sentence is pronounced as free from hatred to the individual, as of compassion for the sufferings he is doomed to undergo.

"Alexander," said the old man, "that miserable carcass that lies there requires now no light. It is not so with thee—thou art a man of taste and judgment. Thou wishest for the banqueting hall. Thy fine ear delights in sweet music; thy delicate palate needs rich viands; thou art not content but with the purest wine. It is fitting, then, that *thou*, and not Selim, should have the only lamp this poor cave can

afford. It is necessary, too, that thou shouldst have the lamp by thy side; for I wish to show thee some things that ought to be *very precious* in thy eyes. They are not my jewels, Alexander; I will not show thee now, though I may *hereafter*, those sparkling diamonds, those red rubies, those purple amethysts, and those yellow topazes, which thou hast so long felt an anxiety to handle, *because they are mine*—accumulated by me in sixty years of hard labour and of incessant toil. No, Alexander, what I have to show to thee is something in which, if any spark of natural affection remains in thy heart, should be more valuable in thine eyes than diamond, ruby, or topaz. Here they are.”

The old man in uttering these words, appeared to take from a pocket in the lining of his robe two small pieces of white silk, and each of them appeared to contain the same material, a long tress of raven-black hair.

“Old man!” cried the Greek, utterly bewildered by what he witnessed, “what means this mystery? Wherefore place before me these women’s tresses?”

“They appear to be the same, but they are not so,” continued the old man; “both are beautiful, but the one is thick and silky, and there is upon it a deeper, richer gloss than the other; this, to a man of your judgment, is apparently a tress of hair cut from the head of a young woman. You have, not improbably, admired that very tress before now, because I cut it whilst she was sleeping—in a deep sleep, like that of Selim yonder—in the chamber of Gunhilda. Those hairs, Alexander, a few days ago added to the beauty, and their loss cannot diminish it, of the young

Turkish woman who was twice your captive, and twice rescued from your grasp by the Crusader Bohemond. I give it to thee, Alexander—keep it; you ought always to preserve it with affection.

“As to this other tress of hair, it is thin, but still fine as the finest silken thread; so fine that each particular hair is almost imperceptible; but if thou examine it narrowly thou wilt perceive there is a shade of whiteness in the midst of its intense blackness; for it was cut from the head of a female of somewhat violent temper, and whose anger, over-indulged, is rendering her prematurely grey. Here is this tress, also, for thee, Alexander; whatever were the faults of her from whom this tress was taken, thou, at least, should look upon her with reverence, because she has chosen to make herself the bondwoman of *thy friend*, Selim.”

“I reverence the bondwoman of the low-born Selim!” said the haughty Greek, forgetting in his pride and indignation even the peril in which he was placed.

“Aye! reverence her,” continued the pitiless old man, “not because she is the bondwoman of Selim, but because she is—*thine own mother!*”

“My own mother! Old man, thou ravest; it is impossible,” said the Greek.

“As surely as Zara was the wife of Feroz, and the mother of Alexander, she is now the bondwoman of Selim.”

“Oh! that my limbs could but bear me to the slave, Selim, where he now lies in darkness, and I would stab him, even whilst he sleeps,” cried Alexander, in his impotent fury.

“And such a brave deed would be worthy of thy past reputation for courage,” said the old man. “I have given thee thy mother’s tress to reverence, but wilt thou not look with love and affection upon the tress of the maiden that was twice thy victim, and twice snatched from thee, as thou wast seeking to sell her to Baghi Sian. Cherish it, Alexander ; for as sure as I now speak to thee, that soft, rich, glossy, silken mass of raven-coloured hair is *thy sister’s*.”

“My sister’s ! oh ! monstrous ! monstrous ! wicked and vile old man, why wilt thou torture me with such a thought ? I the miserable persecutor of the smiling baby I remember when I was a boy. I to have sought her dishonour ! I to have laboured, and toiled, and exposed my life to all the perils of the battle-field, in order that my prize might be the degradation of my own sister ! Wicked, base, malignant old man, what injury have I ever done to thee, that thou should seek to drive me mad, by casting upon me so vile an imputation as this ?”

“Miscreant !” said the old man, whose calm, passionless manner was now changed to one of unchecked rage, “base, dishonoured, faithless, creedless miscreant—base in everything—in thy life as thou shalt be in thy death—thou askest me what injury thou hast done me. Villain ! in thy sleep thou hast been candid. Listen now to thy own thoughts, expressed in the words of Selim. He shall be my witness that the Turkish maiden is thy sister ; and he shall testify against himself and against thee.”

The words of the magician rendered Alexander speechless with terror.

“Evil spirit of the wicked Selim, answer my

questions," said the old man, turning to that part of the cave in which, unseen by Alexander, the body of Selim was lying.

"The evil spirit of the wicked Selim is prepared to answer thee," were the words that issued out of the darkness in the accents of Selim.

"Evil spirit, what said Zara, the bondwoman, was the relationship between her and the Turkish maiden carried away from the Christian camp by the Greek?"

"That the Turkish maiden was her daughter."

"Evil spirit, what was the name of the son of Zara, the bondwoman of Selim?"

"Alexander."

"Evil spirit, say what was the plot laid by the wicked Selim and Alexander of Constantinople against the old man called the magician?"

"To have stolen from him his jewels; to have robbed this cave of every article of value contained in it; to have murdered the old man, and to have buried his body here."

"Alexander of Constantinople, son of Feroz and Zara, brother of Amine," said the magician, "the words which Selim has now spoken in his sleep thou too hast spoken before now; in thy sleep the same has been told to me; and *thou* hast added, that once the place where the jewels had been concealed was discovered, thou and Selim were to watch and sleep by turn, night and day, day and night, for ever, until thou hadst found me sleeping, and then—to murder me. Thou hast wished to look upon those jewels—*behold them.*"

In speaking the words, the magician touched a spring in the table at which Alexander was sitting,

and there burst forth from it a drawer on which the light of the lamp fell directly, and as it did so, there sprang out dazzling, sparkling, glittering rays, white, and red, and purple, which bewildered the eye with their gorgeous glory, and then with the quickness of a lightning flash, as suddenly vanished as they had been hurriedly and unexpectedly seen.

“Thou hast the secret of the old man, Alexander, for which thou plotted against his life. Whatever his crimes, and they have been manifold, he had done no wrong to thee; and yet thou didst seek to take his life—knowing well, if he discovered it, he would take thine, and *he has taken it.*”

“Taken my life!” cried the appalled Greek, driven to desperation by the horror of his situation. “Approach me if thou dare—come but near to me—attempt to lay a hand upon me, and that moment I will slay thee.”

“Ha! ha!” croaked the old man with hoarse glee—“did dying man ever talk more boldly than Alexander of Constantinople? Fool! for hours thou hast been breathing an air impregnated with poison. Approach but thy lips to the glare of the lamp, and thou wilt find a blue flame will issue from thine own mouth and nostrils. I have not poisoned thy wine, but I poisoned the goblet when I rubbed it with this green napkin, a compound in itself of noxious poison: I did not poison thy food, but I smeared the spoon with a poison that is now, whilst I speak to thee, changing thy red blood into water. In two hours from this time thy flesh will be rotted from the bones: in twenty-four hours thy very bones themselves will be like the marshy earth, liquified into a

substance devoid of the smallest remnant of solidity. Even whilst I speak to thee, thy once ruddy cheek is green as the growing rush. Thy breath is hot as if it issued from a burning furnace. Thou hast sought to take my life, and I *have* taken thine. In a few minutes more unendurable pangs will seize upon thee; and if thou wouldst die more bravely than thou hast lived, do this: when the first pain seizes thee, approach thy mouth to the flame of the lamp, and thy wicked spirit will explode in thy cancerous body, as new effervescent wine bursts forth from a worm-eaten cask, in which it has been incautiously placed.

“I leave thee, dog, to die alone and in thy despair. I do so, because I desire to retain life in the sleeping miscreant there, who has not yet performed the devil’s work which he has wilfully chosen to do, and which he would not have the strength to perform if he inhaled for another hour the same pest-imbibed atmosphere which thou hast been breathing for half a day.

“Farewell, Alexander of Constantinople—we meet no more living in this world; but there is another world, as surely as thou sittest there a dying man; and there, though it was in the midst of scorching flames, or of burning ice, my first words to thee will be—Alexander of Constantinople, remember the last dainty dish of which thou didst as a living man partake was of my cooking; that thou didst enjoy it greatly, but never didst ask of what materials it was composed: and now, glutton, voluptuary, sensualist, I tell thee it was of *human flesh*, of the sweetest morsels I could cut from the bodies of two suckling infants. *There* is the meat of which thou hast made thy last meal.”

And as the wicked old man said these words, he placed the bleeding heads of two fair, flaxen-haired infants on the table before the Greek!

The old man disappeared in the darkness; the sound of his dragging a heavy weight after him might be heard, and as he ascended the cavern there rung behind him a fierce peal of laughter, followed by loud shrieks, and the words "Mother! sister! human flesh!" and then—there was a bright flame lighting up the vault, followed by an awful explosion, and then——

There was the silence of death, and mephitic vapours rushed out of every crevice of the cave, and poisoned the air with a dense and stifling smoke.

CHAPTER XXII.

FALSE FRIENDS.

SELIM was awakened to consciousness and pain by the labours, rather than the care of the magician; and as his senses returned to him, he perceived that he was lying in a miserable hovel, on the bare ground, and his burning cheek resting on the cold earth, and adding by the intensity of its cold to the torture he was enduring.

"Where am I? What has happened? What has caused the awful wound in my cheek?"

"Alack! I know not," replied the magician; "I had but entered this hovel—you recognize it—it is supposed to be the only dwelling place I have; and

as I came within the door, and had but closed it to, intending to descend to the cave by the steps outside, I heard an awful explosion—but from what cause arising I cannot tell—only that in a few minutes afterwards the room was filled with a stifling smoke.”

“Ah!” said Selim, “I now remember that when I went to the cave last night—it was about midnight—I went there in the hope of seeing *you*.”

“And Alexander,” said the old man, with a malignant smile,

“Not at all,” said the imperturbable Selim, “for I thought Alexander was either slain the night that I carried off Gunhilda, or had escaped into Antioch. I neither hoped nor expected to meet Alexander in the cave.”

“And yet he was there all the time,” said the old man.

“That is impossible, for if he were there he must have heard me calling both you and him,” said Selim.

“What!” asked the old man, “call for him when you knew he was not there.”

“Oh!” answered Selim, not a particle abashed, “I called *him* when I got tired of calling you, not expecting to see him, but merely to be saying something, as I felt myself oppressed by a strange heaviness, owing to the pestiferous smell in the vault.”

“Ah! *that* was it,” remarked the magician. “These noisome vapours sometimes get into caves, and cause an explosion, which is death to all that have the misfortune to be within reach of them. But what is strange—what, I am sure, will surprise you, is this fact—at the time you were in the cave, and,

as you say, calling for Alexander, although not expecting him to hear you, yet *he* was actually there at the time, and he must have heard you, and yet would not answer you."

"How know you that?" asked Selim, somewhat suspiciously.

"I will tell you and prove it to you," replied the magician. "I descended as rapidly as I could to the cave. At first, I could not enter, from the horrid smoke that kept rolling out from it. At last I ventured in, and I there discovered you lying senseless on the ground, and that severe scald and burn upon your cheek. I perceived, by placing my hand upon your heart, that life still animated you. Old man as I am, I had strength enough to drag you away, along the ground, and if—as I had not strength to carry you—you feel any aching in your head or limbs from the stones I met with in my passage, you must forgive me for the unintentional injuries inflicted upon you, as my great desire was to save your life."

"I thank you," said Selim, as with a wry face he rubbed his head, and then his shins.

The old man smiled a bitter malignant smile, as he continued :—"With difficulty I was able to drag you here, which I have done unnoticed by others. I have drenched you with cold water—I have tried to torture you into re-animation; you will pardon me I am sure, as I desired to preserve your precious life."

"I am bound to be ever grateful to you," said Selim, as he felt himself bruised from head to foot, like a man who has been beaten with heavy sticks.

"All was in vain," added the old man with a diabolical grin; "and at last it occurred to me that

there was one intense agony I had it in my power to employ, and which would infuse animation into the dying, and that was to place your scalding cheek, filled as it is with fire, in direct contact with the frost-hardened earth. That I have tried, and that it succeeded to admiration, you yourself at this moment experience."

Selim could only reply by a yell of intense agony, "Better to suffer a little pain in this life than to be dead forever," observed the magician. "Better the pain you are enduring, than be deprived of the opportunity of ascending, through the blood of the doomed Danish Prince Swein, to the topaz palaces and saffron meadows in which you so firmly believe."

"Much better," said Selim, as he rolled from side to side in pain. "But tell me," he added, his avarice being stronger than any other passion that possessed him—stronger even than bodily suffering—"how know you that when I was in the cave Alexander was there also, and that he must have heard me, and yet would not answer me? Why should *he* have so acted towards *me*?" said Selim, in a voice which showed how deeply interested he was in the question.

"Because, at the very time you were calling him, *he must have been robbing me.*"

"Robbing you!" cried Selim, bounding up into a sitting posture, and staring wildly at the old man—"Robbing *you*! of *what* could he possibly be robbing you?"

"Of some diamonds, and a few rubies," answered the old man.

"Diamonds! and rubies!" exclaimed Selim, his eyes glistening at the very mention of such precious stones. "And have you really diamonds and rubies?"

"I have," answered the magician, with about thirty topazes, and one hundred and forty amethysts."

"Diamonds, rubies, topazes, and one hundred and forty amethysts," repeated Selim, forgetting for the moment, his bodily suffering, as his thoughts gloated over such a precious store of jewelry.

"Yes," continued the old man, "these are the savings of a long life of thrift, and care, and hardship. These are the only solace of my old age: these have been the only things in which I have taken pleasure since the death of my father: these and revenge have been the only objects that have made existence sweet to me. Revenge on all who aided in that father's death; revenge on them and on all in whose veins flows the blood of the persecutors who dipped their hands in his blood. That has been the *occupation* of my life; but the contemplation of these precious stones has formed the *pleasure* of my life. They have been to me what wine, what luxury, what home, what family, what wife, what children are to other men. Whilst living, I have loved to look on them, and to think that with them I could purchase a principality, and yet prefer their possession to worldly honours, rank and dignities. Living, it is my delight—my sole delight—my joy—my only joy to gloat over their radiance—to hold within my grasp things so small, and yet of such inestimable value; for my diamonds—I am a good judge of them—are of the purest water; my rubies flame with a light that seems borrowed from the clouds that receive the last rich rays of the summer's setting sun; my amethysts are as intensely blue as the cloudless sky of Italy; and my topazes are so large and so dazzling

that they look like diamonds that had grown up amid banks of yellow crocusses. These—the solitary pleasures of my life, and which, when I feel myself dying I mean to bury where no human eye shall again look upon them—these—aye, even these—the old man's only poor little innocent luxury in life, Alexander the Greek was robbing me of—his hand was filled with them—when he heard your voice, and yet would not answer.”

“How know you that? How know you that?” said Selim, his eyes starting with anxiety, as the old man's description of his jewelry inflamed his imagination.

“I know it, and will prove it,” replied the old man. “Alexander heard you call, and did not answer you, because he was conscious that if you found him as he was—robbing me of all those precious stones—you would have insisted on his not appropriating them *to his own use alone.*”

“Of course, I would,” said Selim.

“*Of course! you would,*” replied the magician. “You would have said to Alexander, ‘what right have *you* to the old man's jewels? If I object to the old man keeping these jewels, and his making no use of them, I have a still stronger objection to you *alone* having them; and therefore, *you* must not take them away with you.’”

“The very words I should have used, if I had found him robbing you,” observed Selim.

“I knew it,” continued the old man, “and so did Alexander know it when you called, and therefore he did not answer you. And now, to prove to you that he was there and would not reply to you when he could;

I descended a second time to the cave since day-light broke, and whilst you were lying senseless there—and in that cave I found, not one hundred yards from where you were lying, Alexander.”

“Oh! the villain!” cried Selim; “and he robbing you of your jewels.”

“He *had been* robbing me,” said the magician.

“Oh! when next I meet him he shall——” observed Selim in a hurried voice.

“You will never meet him more in this world; and in the next, you certainly cannot expect to encounter *him* in *your* Paradise.”

“What! dead!” said Selim, and he looked earnestly at the old man.

“Remember the explosion, and how narrowly you escaped with life, and how difficult to restore animation to you. The same explosion was fatal to Alexander; for, as I told you, not one hundred yards from where you lay was the headless trunk of Alexander. I knew it by the half burnt dress which a smouldering fire was consuming; near the entrance to the cave I found his head, frightfully burned—the face more like a charred stick than a human countenance—and not far from the body I found his hand, the fingers still grasping, as you may see them, these precious stones; you perceive how firmly the fingers are clutched into the palm, as if in his death agony he would not part with that which he had wrongfully acquired. And this hand—you must remember it well, Selim—its snowlike whiteness, and its crimson-tipped fingers. It is the hand of Alexander; and here are five precious diamonds and two rubies grasped between them. I would not part with these five dia-

monds alone for the territory that gives the title of Prince to Bohemond of Tarentum. Then thus I prove to you, that when you called upon the name of Alexander, he was listening to you—was robbing me—and he hoped in the darkness to escape from the cave with all the spoil. Was he not a villain?"

"Oh! a most base villain," cried Selim, "to think of robbing you—his friend."

"Yes," said the old man, "and at the same time of casting upon another friend—even upon you—the unjust suspicion of having either yourself robbed, or aided another in robbing me."

"The suspicion of my having aided him in robbing you!" said Selim, feeling for the first time a fear of the magician.

"Certainly," added the old man; "for if, upon returning to the cave, I found that I was robbed, and saw you there, and did not see Alexander, or did not know of his being there—as I, in fact, knew nothing of it—what other conclusion could I have come to, but that you yourself had either robbed me, or aided some one else in doing so?"

"Oh! the monstrous villain," cried Selim, "to rob one friend, and cast unjust suspicion on another friend. I am content to suffer the agony I am enduring, since that which causes me pain has rid the earth of such a monster as Alexander."

"Let us think of him no more," said the old man, "but rather turn our thoughts to yourself. How came you to the cave last night? I thought that you were watching from some ruined fortress upon the camp of Swein, and seeking an opportunity to assassinate him."

“My business at the cave last night was to consult with *you*,” replied Selim, “as to the best means of obtaining access to the presence of Swein. I have tried different expedients to pass the line of sentinels, but each time I have failed. It would appear to me, as if Swein and Florine were aware their lives are in peril from an attack such as you and I both contemplate. I can from my habitation perceive, that they walk encompassed with guards, from the moment they pass out of their tents until they return. It is for *you* now to devise a plan by which their precautions may be rendered nugatory. This fact I can tell you—for I have learned it through a spy, the only one I could get within their entrenchments and safely out of them—namely, that they intend to remain where they now are for a few days, until men and horses are so recovered from their long march that they may, on reaching Antioch, be in a fit state to take an active part with the besiegers.”

“Be thou,” observed the magician, “as true to thy vow, as I am unshaken in my spirit and remorseless in my revenge, and Swein will not, as Florine shall not, live to look upon the walls of Antioch.”

“Give me freedom from pain, and this hand shall strike a steady and unerring blow,” said Selim.

“Thy wish shall be accomplished,” said the old man; “now that consciousness has fully returned, I have a balm to assuage thy pain. Lie down again, good Selim. Here, apply this to thy cheek. Keep it constantly moistened for a few hours, and nought will remain but a slight trace of the injury thou hast received. Meanwhile, I shall leave thee to think on the means of executing our plan; and whilst thy

mind is so occupied, my hands shall be employed in consigning to the earth the mangled and blackened remains of him who was once known as the handsome and gallant Alexander of Constantinople."

"Oh! the villain! the base, treacherous villain!" said Selim, as he applied the balsam to his cheek; "to think of robbing thee, and of casting upon me the suspicion of being so vile as to act as his accomplice."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE REPENTING SINNER.

"I HAVE fulfilled my promise to Selim. He has broken his promise to me. He has left me without bidding me farewell, fearing I might inquire whither he was going, and that if he attempted to deceive me by a falsehood, I should by my interrogatories convict him of treachery. Whither can he have gone? With what object? The motive must have been a strong one that induced him to leave this noble lady here, unguarded, without questioning her as to her ransom, or seeking to despoil her of the costly ornaments she wears. He knows, to be sure, that she is weak and sickly, and that I am strong and vigorous, and he counts, without doubt, upon my fidelity—for to him I have hitherto been but too faithful. But he forgets that he has aided in doing me wrong, that having the power to repair it, he did not grant me reparation; and with a true Mussulman's contempt

for a woman, he fancies we can forget injuries, and will repay personal wrongs by service to the wrongdoer. Fool! and villain as he is! he will find himself mistaken in so treating Zara. I promised to keep the Lady Gunhilda safe until his return. Even she to her great agony, aided me in keeping that promise. It has been fulfilled. But there is another promise not yet redeemed: it is my promise to *her*—my promise to her who was the guardian of my child in sickness and in slavery; who gave my daughter back to health, and bestowed upon my child liberty. To the Lady Gunhilda I have said, ransom or no ransom, I would set her free; and *I will* do so; and this is the opportune moment for so doing, when there is none to watch me, none to control me, not one to prevent me.

“Lady Gunhilda shall be free; within an hour from this time she shall be a free woman in the camp of her cousin Florine. I will leave her there myself, and then—aye, then what shall I do? Return here, or remain with her? If I return *here*—having disposed of Selim’s captive without his permission; and, above all, having sent her away without taking from her that wealth which is Selim’s god, and for which he would sacrifice her life as well as mine—my doom is inevitable. I shall fall an instant victim to his rage, or be slain by him, in revenge, in the course of a few days. Well! be it so! of what value is life to me? Why should the woman who has neglected her duties as a wife and as a mother, wish to live? Is it to be despised—contemned—scouted? Is it not fitting that *such a woman* should meet with death from the hands of a base wretch like Selim? Have

I not, in yielding to the impulses of my temper, cast away from me all that makes life precious—the esteem of the honest, the affection of the pure, the reverence of the good. Why wish to live? Ah! no; life is hateful to me, as regards myself. But, let me think, can I not at least try to make whatever remains of it to the sinful Zara useful to others; and, if the opportunity presents itself, beneficially sacrifice it to save the lives of those who deserve to live? Will it not be, for instance, well done, if, to save this good lady from further degradation, from certain spoliation, at the least, I should provoke the anger of Selim, and so be slain? Such a death, vile as it would be, would still be better than the bad and wicked life I hitherto have been leading.

“Placing Gunhilda in the Christian camp, and returning here, would be to secure that one good at least; but then, being slain here—to-day, to-morrow, or a few days hence—I leave my child Amine, without one to rescue her, to save her; I leave her, her fate unknown, her destiny a mystery to me; and, from the conduct of Selim, I am now aware that as long as I remain in his power, instead of aiding, he will do his utmost to baulk me in my researches; for he thinks, as all Mussulmen think, that we women are only fitly treated when we are regarded as no more than the slaves and drudges of mankind.

“If, then, I may entertain the hope of again beholding my child, it must be by flying from this place—not remaining here. And, if I go elsewhere, what person in the wide world is there to whom I can betake myself, for refuge and for shelter, but to her who is my captive?

“Ah! but then she is—a *Christian*. Oh! that name, so justly hated by me. But is it justly hated when I see her—her words a prayer—her acts charity—and that charity extended to the child abandoned by her mother, *not a Christian*; and persecuted by men who are *not Christians*?

“Alas! alas! how is a weak, erring woman to know how to do that which is right, when that which hitherto she thought to be evil proves to be virtue, and that which she supposed to be good is shown to be wicked?

“What is this villain Selim now plotting for? To take the life of an unoffending Christian prince, who has never done him personal wrong. And yet Selim, who is planning such a murder, is, or professes to be, an Ishmaëlian, of the strictest sect of Mahomedans: and then there is that chance conversation I heard; it referred to some plot plainly against the life of the Princess Florine, *the cousin of Gunhilda*. That is a plot against the life of another Christian; and no doubt the vile Selim is a participator in that also.

“I might be useful in counteracting that plot. But how? Not here—once Selim returns. Then my life, not less than my freedom of action, will be in his power; and though I knew all his schemes, I should *then* be unable to counteract them. *Here* then I will not remain; for here I *can* be of no use; and there I *may* be.

“Now, then, to announce my determination to Gunhilda! to tell her she is free! to conduct her to the camp yonder, and when there to solicit her permission to remain: telling her no more than this,

that I have two reasons for remaining; one to protect myself from the vindictive pursuit of Selim; the second, to examine for myself the difference between Christianity and Mahommedanism, and if I find the former true, to embrace it. I must be careful not to hint to her that I have additional reasons for going—to watch over the lives of Swein and Florine, and protect both from the machinations of Selim and his associates.

“Now to Gunhilda, and then at once to fly from this abode of sin and wickedness.”

Such was the manner in which the impetuous Zara communed with herself: and her resolution, once taken, was, on the instant, carried into effect.

A sensation of happiness, such as this wretched victim to unrestrained and unwatched impulses never supposed she could have experienced, was enjoyed by her, when she saw Gunhilda clasped in the arms of Florine, and that, amid broken words, interrupted by caresses, the young beauty had learned she was indebted to Zara for the care of Gunhilda, and the pleasure then bestowed upon herself.

Florine, the moment she heard this, flew from Gunhilda to Zara, and casting herself on her knees before the Mahommedan woman, she kissed her hands and said:—“Noble, generous woman, I thank heaven and thee for the blessing thus bestowed upon me. On my knees I thank heaven—on my knees I thank thee; and from these knees I will not arise, until thou compliest with my prayer—it is that henceforth thou wilt command, as if it were thine own, all that Florine possesses. My rank I cannot give thee—my title I cannot share with thee; but

all else is mine to bestow, and I now, on my knees, pray of thee to command it as thine own."

"Your prayer, beauteous Princess," replied Zara, "is easily complied with by one who has come to ask of you food and shelter. The only special favours I have to ask of you are——"

"They are granted," cried Florine, as she rose from her knees, and running over to where Gunhilda stood, smiling at her youthful ardour, clasped her arms around Gunhilda's waist, and resting her fair cheek on her cousin's shoulder, she added:—"They are granted: and now let me know what they are, for now I can listen to them with patience; and hear thee, whilst I am happy—oh! so happy—and all owing to *thee*."

"The favours," said Zara, "I have to ask are simple and few; but believe me I have special reasons for asking them."

"They are granted," said Florine, with girlish glee.

"They are, first, that as the fact of your cousin, the Lady Gunhilda, being restored to you is only known to yourself and the Prince Swein—I believe there are none others in this tent."

"None, none," replied Florine; "the moment I recognized Gunhilda's voice, and desiring to be alone, that instant I whispered the secret to Swein; but begging him to watch outside, so that our interview might be uninterrupted. Much as I love him, I felt that even his presence would be a check upon my joy. Well, I now understand from the words thou hast said, it is her wish that the fact of her restoration to her friends should remain for the present a secret. Is that thy first request?"

"It is," said Zara.

"It is granted," said Florine; "but canst thou not ask me for some precious gift worth bestowing upon thee?"

"Ah! Princess," said Zara, "I want no gifts. I am at last able to value the world at its worth; and the earth does not contain within its rich and generous bosom any treasure so precious as a virtuous thought in a pure heart. Thou canst give me nothing that I can prize so much as a contemplation of thy own life—thy noble denial of thyself."

Florine turned away and pressed her burning, blushing cheek on the shoulder of her cousin.

"Forgive me, Princess Florine," continued Zara; "I may have said what I ought, perhaps, only to have thought, and never to have expressed in your hearing; but, believe me, I am not practised in flattery. Alas! the great sin of my life, the cause of all my failings, has been that I have only thought of consulting my own wishes, and never of bestowing the slightest consideration upon what might be the feelings or wishes of others."

"Poor woman!" said Florine; "but thy second request, which is granted before it is known?"

"My second request is," continued Zara, "that my presence, the presence of a Mahommedan woman in a Christian camp, should remain as profound a secret as that of the Lady Gunhilda; and to secure that secret being kept, I would ask permission from this moment to be arrayed like one of your female attendants. I perceive their habiliments are the same; that all are dressed in white—have hoods, or thick white veils, and that it is impossible, unless

hood or veil be removed, to distinguish their features ; whilst their robes are worn so wide, as completely to conceal the precise shape or form of the wearer."

"This request," said Florine, smiling, "is easily granted. Hast none other?"

"I have," continued Zara, "two other requests to make: the first is, permission at night to remain in thy tent——"

"Thou shalt have a couch by the side of my own," interrupted Florine.

"Permission, also," added Zara, "to go in and out of your tent, and, if necessary, of the camp."

"The first is granted by myself; the second I shall have to demand from Swein, and he, I am sure, will concede it. But hast no other request?"

"I have," said Zara, "and it is the last; it is, that a party of soldiers be sent to the habitation that I have just left; that they will act there as soldiers do when in an enemy's country—carry off all the valuables they may find, and break what they do not carry away. When the valuables are carried away, I would wish them to be conveyed here, as there are *some* from which I may make a selection, and of which I may stand in need."

A cloud gathered on the fair Florine's brow, as she listened to this request; her cheek grew pale, as it was proposed to her to sanction what she considered was an outrage on an unoffending person; and, at last, there was a blush that spread from her cheek to her forehead, when she heard Zara say she desired to recover something valuable she had left behind.

"Might I entreat of thee to take all the jewelry that is mine, and Princess of Burgundy never possess-

ed any more costly, rather than for the sake of thine, to do as thou now wishest?" said Florine.

"Oh! Princess," said Zara, now with flushing cheek, and flashing eye, "you have done me wrong, Heaven is my witness, in seeking for these things—for they are not *such* as you suppose—I was not desiring aught for my own benefit; but what might, in my hands, be useful to yourself, or to him who is most dear to you. You have a wily enemy to oppose, and it will require the utmost exertions of human ingenuity to baffle him. I told you I had special reasons for making my requests, and though I will not tell them all to you, I can at least state enough to prove how unfounded is your suspicion. It is most desirable that the place where the Lady Gunhilda has fled to should remain unknown to her enemies. If, on Selim's return, he perceives that the place in which he had left her and myself has been pillaged, and then finds we are absent, he will not know but that we may have fled at the approach of the plunderers, or that we may have been captured by them; and, not discovering us by his spies to be here, he may seek for us elsewhere. This plunder of the habitation will completely conceal from him the real fact, that *I*, as well as his captive, have both voluntarily come here. As to those objects which I called 'valuables,' be assured I only employed the term to denote they might be valuable in your service."

"All shall be done in accordance with thy desire," said Florine, in a meek and humble voice. "I feel I have done thee great wrong. Pardon me! for I shall not speedily forgive myself. Oh! do ask from me something in my power to grant, to prove to you

my penitence for having wronged in thought one who has been to me and mine so generous in action."

"If you see me do aught that is strange—that for the moment you cannot account for—believe it springs from a desire to serve you. Believe well of Zara, and pray for her; she has nought else to ask of you, Princess."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DEATH COMBAT.

It was some hours past mid-day, and the shades of evening were descending upon the earth, as the folds of the lofty and capacious tent of Prince Swein were rolled back by cords of gold, displaying the interior of the royal tent, at which were to be seen, seated at the head of a large crescent-shaped banqueting table, the Prince of Denmark and the Princess Florine, and around them her attendant ladies, and the chief knights of the prince's army.

Within the crescent-shaped table, which stretched from side to side, and the outermost edge of the tent, there was a wide space unoccupied, except by minstrels or mountebanks, as they came by turns to seek for applause from the multitudes that thronged around, and in addition to such applause, a pecuniary reward for their talents or their tricks, from lords and ladies seated at the festive board.

The tent of Prince Swein was directly fronting the ravine, reaching within a couple of hundred yards of

its very brink; and as it lay thus opened to its widest extent, everything that passed in its interior was discernible from the walls of the ruined fortification on the opposite side. Between the front of the tent and the borders of the ravine no guard was stationed, as it was deemed to be inaccessible. On this occasion, as on preceding evenings, the front of the tent was occupied by soldiers and camp followers, who came to listen to the music, or to be amused by the sports which were intended to add to the pleasures of the banquet.

Bards presented themselves, who sung to willing listeners fragments of old northern sagas—of Odin, and Frea, and Donar; of Vikings, and Wizards, and the dread Saxnot; of Thor, and the merciless Valkyries, who loved the odour of dead bodies, and delighted in listening to the shrieks of the wounded; of Hertha, and Bertha, and Sunna, and Manni; and these were succeeded by minstrels who told in rhyme what Turpin has compiled in Latin prose of Charlemagne, and Roland, and Oliver, and how the unbelieving Saracens had been slain by brave Christian knights; of the traitor Gannio, and the sad conflict of Runcicevalles; and cheers were mingled with tears, as the themes touched upon, excited the admiration, or affected the feelings of the listeners.

The evening was wearing away, as many others had previously done, in innocent recreation and harmless merriment, in pastime not unbecoming a Christian encampment to enjoy, nor a Christian prince to preside over.

In this manner were passing the hours of the evening on the same day on which Gunhilda was

restored to her cousin, who now sat by her side, and behind both, concealed, in the garb of a menial attendant, was the watchful Zara.

On a sudden there were heard outside the tent loud shrieks of laughter from the multitude, with the cries—"Back! back! make room for the new juggler! Oh! wonder of wonders! make way for him! There he goes, rolling, rolling into the midst of knights and ladies, prince and princess, oh! wonderful! wonderful! and thrice wonderful!"

And as these words were so uttered, in there came, spinning round like a wheel, with outstretched hands and legs, upon which he turned as he went, a man dressed like an Arab. His head was covered by a red cap, which, in all his gyrations and evolutions, kept on, as if it were tightly fastened by some adhesive matter to the skull; the man's brown neck, arms, and legs were bare, and on his body was a tight-fitting white jerkin, fastened at the waist by a red sash, in which were three swords of various lengths, and two daggers, all unsheathed, and all of glittering brightness, which flashed across the eye by his incessant motions, but remained, in all the rapidity of his turnings, immoveably within the close-fitting sash.

As soon as the Arab had reached the centre of the unoccupied space, he stopped suddenly. He stood for an instant on his feet, and then bounded about three feet from the ground, he turned in the air, and came down on both his hands, and as he did so, with his legs kicking high above him, and playing with them all sorts of antic tricks, he walked deliberately round the crescent-shaped table; and whilst the

whole audience within the tent, as well as the lookers-on outside, were roaring out their applause, or bursting with laughter at the manner in which the thin, agile legs were capering in the air, there was one who did not smile, but who kept watching the black dazzling eyes of the juggler, and who perceived that he was taking a particular notice of the situation of each person at the table, and above all, had fixed his eye for a full minute upon the smiling, unconscious, unsuspecting face of Swein; and *she* who watched him seeing this, whispered in the ear of Florine—"Do not pay attention to whatever I do; but believe it is done to serve you. Believe in me and pray for me;" and with these words Zara disappeared from the banquetting hall of the tent.

The juggler had passed and passed again the interior of the wide space reserved for acrobats and mountebanks, delighting all by the oddity of his attitudes, when he again suddenly stopped, bounded upon his feet, and then, leaping high in the air, came squatting down upon the ground; and, after tumbling head over heels as if he were in pain, and injured by the fall, he again sat still, and, taking out some balls, he began to cast them in the air, making them perform all sorts of changes, and again provoking admiration and winning applause by the dexterity of his motions.

When his play with the balls had ceased, he took up the three swords and daggers, flinging them in the air, catching them as they fell, and at last exciting almost as much horror as admiration, when he appeared to be standing in the midst of death, by the shower of armed weapons that appeared momen-

tarily descending upon him, and which he was constantly sending up again into the air. Men held their breath when they saw him playing with these mortal weapons as if he never could be wounded, or as if so to sport with death was a pastime.

It was in the midst of the excitement caused by this fearful—to Europeans almost perfectly novel exhibition—and when the lookers-on were so lost in admiration, that they forgot to exhibit, by the usual demonstrations of applause, their delight and wonder; it was when the air was filled, as it might be said, with ascending and descending swords and daggers, that there swept a female form through them, disarranging them, and sending them down in what was a really dangerous and unexpected confusion upon the head of the juggler.

No one had remarked the female figure until it was seen in the air, and then it came (as it was afterwards supposed) from behind the chairs where Florine and Gunhilda were sitting. It was suspected that there the female, unexpectedly mounting up on the high throne-like back of Florine's regal chair, had caught, with one hand, a golden rope which hung from the roof of the tent, and swinging off into the open space, had purposely flung herself into the midst of the juggler's swords and daggers, and it might have been with the intention, by these means of wounding him where he stood. Whatever was the object, there was but one interpretation put upon the incident itself by all who looked upon it, and that was, that it was done in connivance with the juggler himself; that it was intended to add to the excitement of the sport; that it was a preconcerted ad-

dition to the evening's amusement; and that to him was to be ascribed the merit of this unlooked-for novelty and hence it happened that whilst the juggler himself stood confused, amazed, and frightened, as the swords and daggers were tumbling down and inflicting two slight wounds upon him, the tent rang with acclamations for him, and shouts of laughter burst forth, and cheers were given for "the juggler's wife," as the flying female figure in the air was designated.

And as the applauses and cheers were ringing out joyously, the female continued to swing in the air, and to kiss hands to her audience, as if thanking them for their approval, until at last the swinging of the rope began to slacken, and as it swung her within a few yards of the juggler, she dropped lightly to the earth, and drawing forth swords and daggers from her girdle, she courtsied to all around, as if entreating permission to exhibit her skill.

Cheers again burst forth, and the female tripped over to the table of the guests—took from them two small circular silver dishes, and dashing them up in the air, turn by turn, and catching them as they fell, and then making them send forth a jingling sound as they touched each other in ascending, she returned to the centre of the wide unoccupied circle.

The juggler looked on utterly confounded by this incident, and as much amazed at the women's dexterity as any of the by-standers. He could not at first guess who his new assistant was; her face was covered by a thick white veil, which fitted her like a mask, and was so close as to render every feature undiscernible. In the veil, there were two holes

large enough to give to the eyes a clear, distinct, and unimpeded view of everything, but their colour in the midst of the dazzling whiteness in which they were imbedded, it was impossible to distinguish. Her body was incased in a close thick red silk jacket, concealing from its padding on all sides the female form, and from the jacket sprang out trowsers of the same colour, so wide that they looked like petticoats but that they were fastened above the knees, over which they fell in folds, and left only to view the calf, instep and foot, which in their exquisite moulding and delicacy, especially of her foot, showed that the second juggler must be a female. The foot and the cap—tight-fitting and holding the veil, and decorated with three rich ostrich feathers—where the only emblems by which could be recognized the sex of her who now was a candidate for applause in the tent of Prince Swein of Denmark.

This second juggler had evidently witnessed the feats of him whose sport she had interrupted, and was determined to surpass them. She took up as they lay on the ground before her his balls, his swords, and his daggers, and everything he had done she repeated, and in so doing was applauded as he had been. She then to his swords and daggers added her own; and excited increased admiration by her superior play with them; and at last she seized the silver dishes, and flinging them up in the air one after the other, she caught each as it was spinning round, on the point of a sword as it fell, and so carried them one in each hand around the tent, to the delight of the enthusiastic audience.

The grace, the beauty, the perfection, the delicacy

with which each trick was performed, was so superior to that of the first juggler, that as he looked around he found all eyes were fixed in admiration upon his rival.

"What can be the meaning of this?" he exclaimed, "It can have no other object than to mar my purpose. This woman must know *why* I am here, and is determined upon interfering with me. I will bear this suspense no longer."

He approached the women, and as he did so, he flung three balls in the air as if he were playing with them, and spoke so that none but herself could hear him.

"Hast thou come here to take from me my largesse? If so thou canst have it. Take all the money that may be given, and wait for me outside the camp."

The women still kept playing the swords and dishes as she replied to him: "Yes—so that thou mightest murder me, and take all the money I had collected. The trick would be worthy of the base Selim."

"What! thou knowest me," said the man, stopping his play.

"Yes, I do, villain," replied the women, as she tossed the two dishes, with an unerring aim, back on the table from which she had taken them, "and am determined to lose my life, or save him whom thou now seekest basely to murder;" and as she spoke the words she dropped the points of the two swords to the ground.

Applauses again burst forth when the playing of both artists ceased; and expectation was again

excited, that some new trick or device was about to be exhibited for their amusement.

"I came here," said the man, "to lose *my* life, or to take *his*. Begone, women, then at once. Thinkest thou, I will spare thee, when I will not spare myself."

"Wretch," said the women, "thou dost not come here fearlessly to fight a man, as a brave soldier encounters his enemy; thou comest here basely to slay him, in the presence of his betrothed. It is fitting thou shouldst die by the hand of a woman."

"Ha! now I know thee," said the man, "thou art Zara."

"Aye," replied the women, "as surely as thou art the coward Selim. Away, then, whilst thou hast time to fly. Remain here with the fell purpose of murder in thy heart, and I tell thee, as surely as my name is Zara, thou shalt never leave this tent a living man."

"Fool!" said Selim, "I have laid my plans securely. In ten minutes after I have struck down Swein, there is scarcely one of the gaping fools whose applauses are now ringing in our ears that will be living men. The bows are drawn, and the arrows are out of the quivers, which shall be warm in the heart's blood of Florine, and of every base Christian that sits at that table."

"Then," replied Zara, "it is the more necessary to slay thee. If the good are to die, the wicked who have caused their death should be involved in their destruction. There," said she, flinging one of the two swords she held in her hand on the ground, "take that and defend thy life as best thou can. The

lookers-on, be sure of it, will not interrupt us, nor come to the assistance of either; for they fancy we are but two wretched jugglers; and that what we do is but in mockery, and merely to please them."

A death-paleness overspread the face of Selim. He had been slightly wounded by the falling swords and daggers: he was confounded by this unexpected appearance of Zara before him; and, instead of being able to assassinate, at any moment he pleased, the unsuspecting Swein, he now found himself forced to take up a sword and defend his own life, against one he knew to be as vindictive as she was fearless. Still he was aware that his opponent was a woman, and he believed himself to be as superior to her in skill as in strength; but how was he to escape when he had slain her, from the lookers-on; or how was he then to avoid the general carnage which he had himself prepared for Florine and her followers?

Such were the various and conflicting considerations that made the sword of Selim tremble, as it crossed that held in the steady grasp of Zara.

A burst of applause came from the delighted spectators when they heard the first clash of blade against blade, being certain they should now behold a most magnificent specimen of the sword exercise in a mimic single combat. None but the combatants themselves remarked that each had in the left hand a small dagger, which at the same moment both drew together.

The combat was a brief one; so brief that it was over almost as soon as it begun.

As Selim and Zara crossed their swords, each followed the first cut at one another's head by a stab,

which Zara had failed to parry, but which stuck in her thick quilted silk-jacket, but could not penetrate it; whilst her thrust at Selim, though partially parried by his dagger, yet slid along the ribs, tearing the flesh as it passed onward. The pain of the wound inflamed the rage of Selim; he threw in his blows in quick succession one upon the other, and as he did so, compelled Zara rapidly to give ground before him.

Great was the applause as the fire-sparks struck from the sword blades in those desperate blows and skilful parries.

At last Zara appeared to stumble, and Selim rushed in upon her, and as he did so her nimble left hand crossed his right wrist with the dagger, and at the same instant it was plunged to the hilt in the side of his neck; and Selim with that blow bounded up from the earth, and then, without a groan, fell on his face.

Selim *did not hear* the cheers and huzzas which marked, what was conceived to be, his grand theatrical defeat. Zara did, and grasping the rope which hung down in what might be now considered as the arena in which gladiators had been fighting, she caught at it, and with a short run, and vigorous jump, she made it swing her high over the heads of the guests, and then dropping behind the chair of Florine, she disappeared as suddenly as she had presented herself to the view of the spectators.

Acclamations marked her exit as her entrance, and then the eyes of all were turned to Selim, expecting to see him rise, and like those who had preceded him go around the table, where sat dames, knights, and nobles, calling out, *largesse, largesse.*

Selim remained still—perfectly still! There was no motion in a single limb. Not a finger moved, but there he lay with his face buried in the earth.

The applause continued; but then, as if the same thought had occurred at the same instant to every spectator, the applause as suddenly ceased—every voice became mute. There was the silence of death all around, and a sudden chill of terror seemed to fall on every boisterous spirit in that festive assembly.

“My beloved,” said Florine, turning to Swein, “I fear something terrible has happened to that poor man, who is lying there. It is our privilege to succour the distressed. Come with me.”

Swein and Florine, followed by Gunhilda, descended from their throne. Their guests rose as they did so; but Florine motioned to them to remain sitting, and then, holding Gunhilda’s hand in hers, she walked after Swein around the table to the place where Selim was still lying.

There was no perceptible motion in the prostrate body.

Swein stooped down, and turned round Selim, so that as he was turned his staring eyes seemed to gaze on the face of Gunhilda, and the moment she saw him, she shrieked, and cried aloud, “O God! it is the face of the wretch who bore me away from the Christian encampment, and who has vowed, Swein, to take thy life. Touch him not—touch him not—this is but a device to slay thee. Oh! horrible! horrible!”

And as Gunhilda spoke these words, she fell to the earth completely insensible.

“Florine,” said Swein, look to thy cousin. This man is dying or dead, and no matter what evil he may have contemplated against me, I forgive him,

and shall do my utmost to preserve him. I will bear him in my arms to my own couch."

As the noble prince spoke these words, he stooped, raised up the body of Selim, and turned to say to an attendant, "Bid Brother Bernard hasten to me—it is to save life or soul."

Such were the last words ever spoken in this world by Prince Swein of Denmark; for at the moment an arrow, shot with a sure and deadly aim, struck him in the forehead, and prostrate to the earth fell the dead bodies of the intended victim and the intending assassin.

A shriek of horror arose; but it was on the instant converted into one of agony, for a flight of arrows amid the multitude outside the tent, as well as in the interior, inflicted wounds and death upon several.

"The will of God be done!" said Florine, rising from the side of the prostrate form of the fainting Gunhilda. "My husband is slain. He has died performing an act of charity. Blessed be God! in all his mercies. Now, knights—soldiers—to the front; protect this multitude by your long shields; save them at the risk of your lives; it is your duty. Archers, to your post. Our assailants are *there*," and she pointed to the battlements of the ruined fortress opposite. "See," she added, as a stream of blood started from her neck, they have struck thy mistress, as well as slain thy prince. Thank God! that I am permitted to shed my blood on my road to Jerusalem. To the front—to the front—valiant knights, and prove yourselves worthy Crusaders. My shield—my shield. Ah!" cried the heroine, as an arrow transpierced her arm, "I could not bear it now.

"My God! my God! glory, honour, and praise be to thy name! I believe that last arrow which I feel still quivering in my side will, with thy blessing, win me martyrdom. To the front—to the front—brave knights, remember ye each bear a cross, and there is no death so glorious as that of——"

The heroine sunk, exhausted from loss of blood, to the earth; but her orders were strictly obeyed: the Northmen locked their long shields in each other, and advancing in a firm compact line, strong as a wall of steel, to the very edge of the ravine; the archers followed them, and poured in such a deadly shower of arrows upon the assailants in the fortifications opposite to them, that the walls were speedily cleared amid shrieks and yells of agony.

There was a pause for a few moments after the repulse of the assailants, which was only broken by the moans of the wounded, and the fearful groans of the dying, when suddenly was heard the clashing of swords, and the cries of men in close combat, and their shouts and huzzas of "The Holy Cross! the Holy Cross!—God wills it! God wills it!" and the Northmen beheld a desperate conflict in the ruined fortress between infidels and those they knew to be Crusaders, from the cross on their breasts and shoulders. The conflict was followed by the Crusaders driving the infidels over the battlements, to be dashed to pieces in the ravine below them. Not a man of the infidels was spared from that fearful fall; the living, the dying, and the dead were cast over with indiscriminate fury; and as the shrieks and yells arose of the living and wounded, there were still louder shouts of "The Holy Cross! the Holy Cross! —God wills it! God wills it!"

"What mean these shouts?" said Florine, as consciousness returned to her. "Do my ears deceive me, or my wishes betray me? They sound to me, as if the Crusaders were winning a glorious victory over base and treacherous assassins."

"Thine ears do not deceive thee, heroic princess," whispered Zara. "There is not one of the wretches who were in the plot to slay thee, thy brave betrothed husband, and thy gallant followers, who is now living. They are all put to death—to the last man; and the first of them to die was the worst, even with his fell purpose unfulfilled. And that man was Selim."

"And by thy hand," observed Florine.

"By my hand, and in open, deadly combat," answered Zara; "it was life against life—would that I could have saved the noble Swein!"

"Thou didst thy utmost as mortal to preserve him," said Florine, bursting into tears. "God willed to take him, and the will of God be done in all things; for the afflictions He sends us are to purify us, make us worthy to receive the blessings He has in store for us. Glory, and honour, and praise be to Him, now and for evermore. My noble Swein took up the cross, with me to bear it, and now he has been called to receive his reward; and the crown he wears in heaven I may be permitted to share, if I bear the cross as he did with noble fortitude, unshaken courage, and untiring charity to the last. My watchword with Swein was 'God wills it;' without him I still say, 'God wills it;' the will of God be done!"

Florine had again fainted, and Zara was employed

in staunching her wounds, when she heard these words :—

“If the Lady Gunhilda be here, I pray you permit me to see her. I have come with a detachment, headed by Guy of Mascon and Philip of Brefney, to aid in her rescue from Selim, her captor. We have been sent by Bohemond. Tell her, she who waits without is Amine.”

“Amine! my child! Oh what will be her shame,” exclaimed Zara, bursting into tears, “when she is told she stands in the presence of her wicked, sinning mother?”

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BATTLE OF ANTIOCH.

THE city of Antioch was in the possession of the Crusaders ; and again the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered up in the Christian churches, the beauty and the magnificence of which had saved them from destruction, although they could not preserve their altars from sacrilege. Of these churches we are told by an ancient chronicler, that—

“Their golden mouldings an Arabian made,
Irish and English hands their statues formed ;
From Mount Atlas came their marble walls,
From Cyprus, England, Tyre—brass, iron, glass.”

In the midst of the rejoicing of the Christians at the recovery of Antioch, arrived the intelligence that Corbohan, the Sultan of Mossoul, with an army of four hundred thousand men, had reached the city walls, confident of victory, and certain of being able to effect the entire destruction of the Crusaders.

Then it was, says Robert the monk (whose words will be found in the remainder of this chapter,) that the Bishop of Puy, with the assent and approval of all, proclaimed a three days' fast.

Each one then made, with a devout and contrite spirit, his confession; and the man, who had more than sufficed for himself of food, gave to him who had not enough to eat; and those three fast days were passed in perfect humility, and complete piety of heart, and penitential processions to the different churches, and in prayers imploring the mercy of God.

And when the sun arose on the third day, then there were Masses said in all the chapels of all the churches of Antioch, and all the Crusaders, at Holy Communion, partook of the Body of our Lord

And then in accordance with the order for the coming battle, as it had been arranged at a general council of the leaders of the army, the whole force of the Crusaders was arranged into six separate divisions, and the manner in which they were marshalled was as follows:—

The first division was under the command of Hugh the Great and the Count of Flanders; the second was Duke Godfrey's; the third was that of Count Robert of Normandy and his followers; the fourth was under the command of the Bishop of Puy, who bore with him to the battle-field the sacred spear which had pierced the side of our Saviour. The fifth division was Prince Tancred's; the sixth, Prince Bohemond, who had with him all the light armed infantry, and knights who were compelled to fight on foot, because, in the famine that had been endured by them, they were under the necessity of selling their war-horses.

Bishops, priests, clerks and monks, clothed in sacred vestments, marched out of the city with the Crusaders, bearing in their hands large crosses, and blessing the soldiers as they went, and singing the psalm "*Salvum fac populum tuum Domine*," and such other holy hymns as are peculiarly applicable to a time of tribulation. And as the bishops and priests so proceeded with the Crusaders, the Christians who looked upon this martial and religious procession from the towers and walls of Antioch joined in the psalms, and united their voices with the prayers that were thus offered up for the safety of the Crusaders.

Out then through the gate, facing that place called "the Cemetery," went the soldiers of Christ to encounter the satellites of Anti-Christ.

Now Corbohan was standing on a hill, and from thence looking down upon the Crusaders as they thus marched out of the city, and turning round to the officers near him, he said :—

"Move not, my soldiers. Stir not a step forward, but let the Crusaders, undisturbed, all march out, in order that we may be the more sure of surrounding and destroying them."

Corbohan, whilst he was speaking in this manner, had near to him a certain man, a native of Aquitaine, who had become a slave to his appetite, and therefore, unable to resist the hunger that had been universally felt in the Christian encampment, fled from it, and deserted to the enemy. This renegade had spoken many opprobrious words about the Christians to Corbohan; had told him that the Crusaders were dying of hunger; that all, like himself, were thinking of running away; that they had eaten all their horses; that they were wasted with famine, and that

no other recourse was left to them but to fly from, or to give themselves up as prisoners to him—Corbohan.

As the six different divisions of the Crusaders' army came into sight, Corbohan inquired from the Aquitaine renegade, who and what they were—questions that the man of Aquitaine could easily and readily reply to.

And whilst Corbohan was asking these questions, and the man of Aquitaine was answering them, the sun shone forth, and its bright rays fell upon the lance points, and burnished scale armour of the Christian knights, dazzling the eyes of the lookers on, as the rays were reflected from polished lance, and shining helmet, and glittering hauberk, and inspiring a feeling of terror into the hearts of adversaries.

And Corbohan looked upon them all—individually and collectively—and he groaned in his spirit as he gazed upon them, and then he said to those who stood by his side:—

“This is a mighty and brave race of men, and splendidly are they armed. They are warriors, I am convinced, who wish not to retreat, but to advance—who are determined not to yield, but to conquer.

Corbohan then turned to the apostate, and said:—

“Most wicked of wicked villains, what scandalous lies thou hast been telling of these men—of their eating their horses, and being pinched with famine, and of running away from me. By Mahomet! if others are to suffer through thy falsehoods, then thyself shall be the first to deplore them, and thy base head shall fall because of thy untrue tongue.”

With these words Corbohan summoned his executioner to his side, and in a moment afterwards the

unsheathed sword lopped off the head of the deserter ; and so a fitting punishment was inflicted upon a liar and a renegade.

Corbohan then called to his side the Emir who had charge of his treasure, and whispered to him that if he should see, as a signal, a fire lighted in front of his soldiers, at once to take and bear away with him all the wealth of which he had charge. Corbohan, in giving these directions, showed that he well knew before the battle began the result would be disastrous to himself.

As soon as our soldiers descended into the open plain where they might be marshalled in close ranks together, they all, at a signal from the Bishop of Puy, halted ; and then all listened with profound silence to the harangue which he addressed to them.

The Bishop of Puy wore that day a coat of mail, and in his right hand he held aloft the holy spear, and these are the words which he on that occasion addressed to the Crusaders :—

“ All of us who are baptised in Christ are children of God and brothers one to the other. Those who are thus united by a spiritual bond should also be conjoined by a sincere love. Let us fight then as brothers, for the salvation of our souls, and the safety of our lives ; because both are at this moment in great peril.

“ Bear in mind, my brethren, that which our Lord God has been pleased to reveal to you in visions, namely, that the tribulations which you have already endured have fallen upon you because of your own sins.

“ From those sins you have now purged your souls, and you have therefore been reconciled to your God.

What then need you fear, when, by no possibility, can any misfortune befall you; for he who dies in the battle shall still live: he will exchange for the fugitive and precarious pleasures of existence here below, eternal joys which are unchangeable and never-ending; whilst he who escapes alive from the conflict will triumph in the victory won over his enemies, will be enriched by their wealth, and never again exposed to the pangs of want and misery.

“You know, my friends, what you have suffered, and now behold a compensation for those sufferings; for your Lord has now brought and placed before you the riches of the East, in order that they may fall into your hands.

“Be then of good cheer—be in this battle brave-hearted soldiers, for the Lord will send a legion of his saints, who will inflict a heavy punishment upon your foes. Those saints you shall with your own eyes look upon, and be you not dismayed at the awful clangor of their arms. You ought not, in sooth, be terrified by their presence; for their aspect is not unknown to you. Terrible and tremendous, however, is the aspect of celestial spirits when they render themselves visible to the eyes of mortals.

“Behold! there are your enemies before you—see them! mark their demeanor—note how they stand with trembling limbs and outstretched neck, like to the timid stag and fearful hind, more ready to fly from an encounter with you, than to face you in combat—more confident in their speed to run than in their capability to withstand your charge. To you their manner of fighting is well known, they are more dangerous when they are retreating than when they are advancing.

"Onward, then, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to battle—and may the Omnipotent Lord God be with you, and be your helper."

"Amen!" thundered forth the entire of the Christian army, as if with one voice and one heart.

The legions of the Crusaders were then deployed in long lines, and in front of all, with standard uplifted, marched Hugh, who was justly designated "The Great." To him this privilege of precedence in the Christian army was rightfully conceded, and was properly maintained by his valour and his virtues.

To Hugh's forces succeeded the others in the order that has been already mentioned, and so each advancing in turn to the front, the line of the Christians was so extended that it was flanked at one side by the river, and at the other by the mountains: the army covering by this extension of line a breadth of country of about two miles.

Corbohan, seeing this movement of the Christians, ordered his men to fall back, so as to have the mountains at their rear. Our men followed them as they retreated, but the advance as well as the retreat, was on each side made with slow and deliberate steps.

The Turks then divided themselves into two bodies, one wheeling off towards the sea, and the other remaining stationary in the plain. By this movement they hoped to outflank the Christian army, and from their rear to shoot them down with arrows.

The moment this movement was detected by the Christians, a seventh detachment was formed for the purpose of attacking the corps of Turks which had separated from the main body. The seventh detach-

ment of Crusaders was composed of soldiers taken from the men under the command of Duke Godfrey and the Norman Count; and over them was placed as commander a certain valiant warrior, named Rainald.

Against Rainald the Turks then sent additional force to sustain those first detached from the main body. Between these a conflict took place, and many were slain on both sides.

When the other six bodies of the Crusaders came within an arrow's flight of the Turks, the Turks, desirous to prevent a nearer approach, began shooting at them, but not one of their missiles reached the Christian lines; for a strong oblique wind blowing at the moment, impelled the Turkish arrows aside.

Upon the Turks perceiving this, they turned their horses' heads and fled; and thus the first line of the Christians which sought for battle in the battle-field, could not encounter a foe—they who wished to have before them an enemy to give or to receive a blow, could not obtain what they sought for.

Whilst the first line was in this position a message was sent to Hugh the Great from Bohemond, to send him aid, as he was fighting against overwhelming odds with the Turks.

Hugh the Great, upon receiving this message, instantly turned round to his followers and said:—

Oh! valiant heroes—here the battle flies from us, let us seek the conflict where it is to be found—let us hasten to the aid of the illustrious champion, Bohemond. There is the combat which you long for

—there push forward against that iron-clad foe whom you wish to encounter.”

No sooner was the words spoken, than Hugh the Great and his gallant men hastened to the aid, and stood by the side of the brave Bohemond and his soldiers.

The leader of leaders, Duke Godfrey, observing this movement, advanced at a quick pace with all his men to sustain this movement. He was perfectly free to do so, for the enemies who had been in his front were retreating before him. His place was, he rightly thought, where the whole strength of the Persian soldiery was concentrated. There, he said, was the place where the greatest military prowess was to be displayed, and that, consequently, was the most fitting position for Hugh and Godfrey to occupy—associates in war, friends in peace—ever fittingly united, ever cordially co-operating with each other.

As Hugh the Great entered into the thick of the fight, he noticed one of the foemen, bolder and braver than the rest, who was eagerly engaged by shouts and cries in urging on his followers to conflict. Against that warrior Hugh spurred his foaming war-horse, and with his lance perforated the foeman's throat, and so stilled his war-cry for ever. But what did the hapless warrior on receiving that mortal thrust? Lifeless he fell to the earth, and his soul descended to the devils in hell.

Directly after this occurrence, a very calamitous circumstance occurred to our men. Odo of Yper, who bore the standard, was struck by a poisoned arrow, and from intensity of agony fell to the ground, and the standard fell at the same time with him; but William of Berne cut his way, with a

drawn sword right through the enemy, and raised the standard from the ground, and held it erect, and aloft.

What deeds of valour the leader of leaders, Duke Godfrey performed; what the courageous Bohemond accomplished; what an illustrious band of brave Christian knights achieved, neither the tongue could tell, nor the hand write, nor the page contain. There was no man of ours there that day a laggard, and not one a coward, nor even if there could be found one, was the opportunity afforded to him of being either unwilling, or indisposed to fight; for the enemy in overwhelming numbers pressed upon each man, and the more of our foes were killed, the more the numbers of them, determined to fight, seemed to increase; they gathered around our men as swarm thickens upon swarm of flies upon a rotten carcase.

And so fought the Crusaders a long, a desperate fight, until at last weariness oppressed their limbs with this unending combat, and this ceaseless carnage, and yet the number of the foe prepared to fight, and willing to combat, was not apparently diminished!

And then it was that there was seen to descend from the mountains a numerous army of knights in white armour, whose standard bearer and leaders were George, Maurice, and Demetrius!

These were first discerned by the Bishop of Puy, who, as he looked upon them, called out with a loud voice:—

“O Christian warriors! behold there is the aid that God has promised to send us!”

And as our soldiers looked upon these white knights they would assuredly, but for the hope they

had in the Lord, have been stricken with a very great fear.

As to the enemy, when they beheld the white knights, a mortal terror seized upon them, and placing their shields upon their backs, they turned right away from our men, and fled from the Crusaders as fast as each man could.

The Turks who had taken up a position near the sea, no sooner saw the flight of their comrades, than they set fire to the grass that lay at their feet as a signal to those in their encampment to retreat in all haste, and carry off all the treasures they could conveniently remove.

The Turks who were in the mountains, recognizing the signal which had been agreed upon, that instant decamped with all the spoils they were able to bear away. But of what avail was it to them to do so; when they were not allowed to retain possession of that treasure; for the Armenians and Syrians, perceiving that they had been defeated, and that our soldiers were pursuing them, at once intercepted and slew them.

Hugh the Great, Duke Godfrey, and the Count of Flanders, gathering together all the knights under their command, rode in a compact body towards the water where the battle was still raging, and where the enemy, though defeated, was still prolonging the struggle. Then did these valiant knights break in upon the foe with such a tremendous charge, that they completely cut them off from their encampment, to which they were retreating. And then these knights, in order that they might pursue the enemy with greater effect, mounted the horses of those whom they had slain, and removing the bridles from the

heads of their own steeds, which an insufficiency of food had rendered weak and inefficient, they permitted the poor animals to range at large through the battle-field.

Oh! the wonderful virtue and immense power of the Almighty God. Thy soldier, O Lord! who had been afflicted with a long fast, was now pursuing a brawny and well fed foe; and now the strong was so much afraid of the weak, that he dare not as much as look back at his own wealth, from which he was forced to fly! Thy spirit, O Lord! was in the heart of thy soldiers; it gave strength to their body, and filled them with dauntless bravery. No cupidity for spoil retarded thy soldiers in the work of war; no avaricious desire for wealth delayed them; what they wanted, what they sought for, and what by their valour they gained was victory—a complete victory!

As the butcher in the slaughter-house massacres the cattle, so massacred on that day were the Turks by our soldiery. Blood spirted from the bodies of the wounded; and the dust rose in clouds under the hoofs of the war-horses; and the air was darkened, and a dense cloud hung over the battle-field, giving to the scene of fight the appearance which the earth presents on a misty morning.

The foe as they fled reached a small hill, and there they hoped they might collect their forces, and repel the attack of our men. To that spot was carried by a rapid steed an old Christian knight, named Gerald de Milione, who had been weakened by long sickness. He came unexpectedly upon the Turks, and was slain by their javelins, and so met with a death worthy of a Christian soldier. That death, however, was not

long unavenged. It was observed by those who followed close upon the heels of old Gerald—by Edward of Pucoli, Pagani of Belluno, Droge, and Thomas, and Clarenbald, and other valiant youths belonging to the division of Hugh the Great, who without a moment's hesitation charged the enemy, and in so doing met with a desperate resistance. In that portion of the field there was fought an awful combat; but God helping, and the number of our men increasing, the enemy were utterly dispersed. On that spot especially an immense quantity of blood was shed, and a great many headless bodies were left; and there the enemy fled on all sides. They struggled no more, but each one tried to save himself as he could.

The pursuit of the enemy was continued from the field to those two points known as the Pharfar Bridge, and the Castle of Tancred, and farther than these our men could not go, because night came on, and with nightfall, and not until then, the carnage ceased, and the battle was at an end.

There were slain of the enemy on that day, one hundred thousand horsemen, but as to the footmen they were so numerous, that the bodies of the dead were considered to be countless.

As to the wearied Christian soldiers, instead of marching back to the city, which was now far distant from the scene of conflict, they repaired to the encampment of their foes, and there found a sufficiency of food to supply their wants; for our enemies had, before the fear of God touched their hearts, filled for the repast they intended to take, pots, and pans, and cauldrons with meat; but, poor wretches! that which they had so prepared for themselves, they

were not allowed sufficient time either to cook or to eat.

There, then, in the enemies' encampment, might be seen the venerable Bishop of Puy, wearing a helmet and a coat of mail, and the holy spear in his hand, and tears of joy bedewing his cheeks, and cheering up the Crusaders, and exhorting them to give thanks to God for being victors, and saying to them such words as these :—

“From the time you have begun to be soldiers, there never have been soldiers to be compared with you, because none, in so short a space of time, have fought so many and such great battles as you have done, from the hour you passed the sea at Constantinople. Far—far, indeed, must be removed from the Christian faith, the man who sees what you this day have seen, and yet is not ever true and devoted in his love to God.”

Such words as these did the venerable bishop speak, and by such discourses did he instruct the people confided to his care, and by such did he prevent them from indulging in unbecoming jests or unbeseeming laughter; for no one could look upon his noble countenance without feeling reverence for him, and none would presume in his hearing to give utterance to vain words.

The night was passed by the Christians in the camp of Corbohan, and on the following morning they found themselves the masters of fifteen thousand camels, and of horses, mules, asses, sheep, and oxen without number. They also found in the encampment a vast number of gold and silver vessels, magnificent cloaks, great spoils of high price, and in wondrous variety, and with all these they returned

triumphant to Antioch; and, then, by all who had remained behind—by priests, clerks and monks—they were welcomed home with a joyful and solemn procession.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LAST.

THE tidings of a great victory won by the Christians over the army of Corbohan who sought to recapture Antioch, were conveyed to the camp of Florine by Philip of Brefney, who, once assured of the safety of Gunhilda, and having bidden farewell to Amine, had returned to Bohemond, entrusting all the females to the especial charge of Guy of Mascon.

No sooner was the return of Philip announced, than Florine commanded that he should be instantly conducted to her presence.

The young Irish knight found Florine reclining on a couch, and sitting close to the pillows on which rested her cheek, now ashy white, was the Lady Gunhilda, whilst kneeling on opposite sides were Amine and Zara. The eye of the youthful soldier was too well accustomed to the battle-field and its sad consequences, not to be able at once to recognize in the sunken eye, and the deep breathing of Florine, that her hours of life were but few; and that, not improbably, before the sun had set, the spirit of the young martyr would have ascended to heaven. The hope he did not feel himself, he looked for (with the wish he might find it there) in the face of Guy

of Mascon, who stood with steady eye and folded arms, gazing with the same reverential awe and love, as he would at the picture of a saint, upon the fair and gentle Florine. The compressed lip of Guy, as he struggled to master feelings he deemed it unbecoming to betray, showed that he, too, was waiting but to witness the death of Florine.

"Thy blessing, good and gracious lady," said Philip of Brefney, as he dropped upon his knees, by the side of Amine, before the couch of the expiring princess.

"My blessing be upon thee, good youth! said Florine, in a low, yet firm voice—"but before thou risest from thy knees, tell me what tidings of the Crusaders at Antioch."

"The cross triumphs, and the red flag of Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum, floats on the citadel of Antioch; and the army of Corbohan is scattered, as dust is dispersed in the desert, by the strong south wind," replied Philip.

"Kneel, my children, kneel all, and thank God for this glorious victory. It is one in which every Christian should rejoice. It is the triumph of the cross," said Florine.

All knelt as they were desired—and a brief silence followed, as the heart of each was engaged in prayer.

"Zara—my dear friend—my kind, good nurse—my precious convert—art thou not *my* convert, not Gunhilda's?" said Florine with a seraphic smile.

"I am not worthy to kiss the dust beneath thy feet, angelic woman! How see thee suffering torturing pains, and accepting all as blessings, and not desire to be of *thy* religion?" answered Zara, bursting into tears.

“Flatter not the dying, Zara, lest the evil one should have the power to present a temptation to the sufferer in her last agony,” said Florine. “I feel my lips parched; I pray of thee to compound a draught like the last, it may give me strength to express the last worldly thoughts that remain on my mind.”

Zara rose from her knees, and proceeded to a table that lay at a short distance from the couch of Florine, and close to the side of the tent. On this table there were glasses and vases of various shapes. Zara was engaged with them for a few minutes, and then bearing a small glass bowl in her hand, stepped from the table, when Florine said to her:—

“Not now—the burning thirst has passed away; leave it as it is, until I feel a greater need for it. Come hither, Zara, I have something to say will interest thee.”

Zara replaced the bowl, and walked slowly over to the couch of Florine, and as she did so, there stole forth out of the clustering folds of the tent, (unperceived by any one in the sick chamber) a dark red hand, holding a phial, from which fell a few drops of a liquid, white as milk, into the glass bowl, and the hand and phial then suddenly disappeared.

“Philip of Brefney,” said Florine, turning to the young Irish knight, “thou hast begged my blessing. I hope I am about to bestow upon thee the greatest blessing which man can possess in this world. Thou art a native of a noble country, Philip. Ireland is the island of saints and of great scholars, and Burgundy has been blessed by the presence of Irish men—edified by their virtues, instructed by their learning. As a Burgundian, I owe a debt of grati-

tude to Ireland; for she has taught my people, and saved the souls of thousands by means of her Irish priests,—priests who have been as pure in faith as they have been illustrious by their holy lives. Philip, I hear from Guy of Mascon thou art as brave a man as ever bore the cross of a Crusader; and I have learned from my cousin Gunhilda, and from the good and noble maiden who kneels by thy side, that thou art as generous and as gentle as thou art brave. Philip and Amine, I desire that the same course which my beloved Swein and I had adopted, you should follow—that betrothed this day to each other, you should, each in your respective sphere, serve the cause of God as Crusaders; and if it be heaven's will that both should live, as Swein and I had hoped, to see the holy sepulchre rescued from the hands of infidels, then both should be united in the bands of holy matrimony. I have taken care to bequeath to both an ample fortune. Thus, Philip, I bestow upon thee not the mere blessing of a poor sinner like myself, but that which is, for a true and virtuous knight as thou art, the greatest of all worldly blessings—a good and virtuous wife.”

“And now, my dear nurse—Zara—the draught, quickly; I feel a sudden, death-like faintness descending upon me.”

Zara ran over to the table, and was hurrying back with the draught to the princess, when the turbid appearance of the liquid in the glass bowl excited her surprise. She feared she had made some mistake in the composition of the draught, and placing it to her lips, sipped it, and the moment she did so, a thrilling shriek of agony burst from her lips, and she cried:—

"Poison ! poison ! deadly poison ! There must be some one in the chamber who poured poison into the bowl since I placed it on the table."

A shriek of horror burst from every lip but that of Guy of Mascon. He gave a glance around, and then, with all the energy and strength with which a tiger springs upon his prey, he at a single bound drove at what was but apparently a small crevice by the side of the table, and tearing it open, he dragged forth a man, and at the same instant dashed him to the earth, and cried—"Philip, bind the villain's legs ;" and as these words were said, a tent cord was cut with the sword of Philip, and the man lay helpless on the floor.

The man was an old man, he was clothed from head to foot in black coarse cloth, and on his head was a close-fitting black cap, which covered his forehead close to the eyes, whilst all the rest of his face, with the exception of his nose, was covered with white hair.

It was the wicked old man—it was the magician—it was the same man that Selim and Alexander alike called "Chatenay."

"Ha ! false pilgrim," said Guy of Mascon, "despite thy disguise, I know thy hellish face ; let us see it fully." And as he said the words, he tore the black cap from the man's forehead.

"The conflict is over—the compact is at an end—my time is come ; rescue or no rescue,—I yield. Do now with me what thou wilt," said the old man.

Guy of Mascon trembled like a child as he looked upon the old man lying on the earth before him, for on the broad, red wrinkled forehead, there was a line drawn so straight and so white, that it was difficult to say whether it was a white protruding bone or a streak of chalk. At length Guy so far recovered his

breath as to say :—"Walter, son of Peter the woodman, art thou living, or art thou, indeed, an evil spirit in the shape of a man I once knew living; speak the truth, I adjure thee, in the name of God."

"I am Walter Fitz Walter; I am the son of him who was called Peter the woodman; I am a living man, and *in me* an evil spirit; I am, however, not a demon, but I have made a compact with the demon that my power should continue until the same hand that had inflicted the wound upon my forehead should expose it to mankind. It is because it was possible, although improbable, that such a time should ever come, or such an accident ever happen, that I dare not lay a hand on thee, even if I were disposed to do so, and—I was not."

"Not disposed to injure me," said Guy, "why none have done thee so much wrong as myself."

"What thou didst," observed the old man, "thou didst in defence of thy father, and to revenge the wrong I was seeking to do to him. And as thou didst, so have I done: I have revenged my father's wrongs. I pray thee, let me speak to the Princess Florine; it is the last favour thy old school-fellow and companion will ever ask of thee. I beg of thee to raise me from the floor, so that I may stand. Bind my legs as fast as thou wilt, I cannot *now* escape from thee."

"Do that which he asks, Philip," said Guy. "I would not for a principedom lay my finger upon him again."

Philip did as he had been directed. He unloosed the cords that bound the old man's arms, placed him erect on the floor, close to where the glass bowl was lying still on the table; but in doing so, bound the

legs so tightly together, the magician could not move without falling.

The old man smiled at these precautions, and then addressed himself to the Princess Florine, who was so aroused from the lethargy that had been fast falling upon her senses, that she now sat upright on the couch, her body supported, and head resting on the bosom of Gunhilda.

"Florine, Princess of Burgundy," said the old man, "I have been discovered in the attempt to poison thee. I confess my crime. It exposes me to death, and that death I shall probably experience before thine arrives; but I hope not. I hope to see thee die: it will be the last satisfaction left to me."

"Unhappy man," said Florine, "I forgive thee, and I pray God to forgive thee. But why seek to poison me? I had done thee no wrong."

"God will not forgive me this sin," said the old man, "and if He did, there are other and greater sins on my soul to consign me to eternal perdition. I sought to poison thee, because I knew thou hadst received the last sacraments of thy Church; of *the Church*, and these sacraments *I know*—for I say nothing on *belief*—that they are often sufficient to cure the most mortal diseases, and I feared they might have a like effect on thee. Alack! I forgot that if it were HIS will they were to save thee this time from the jaws of death, that my will to destroy thee would be of no effect. Thou sayest thou hast done me no wrong. *I am wronged*, and thou art the living representative of the wrong-doer, and I revenge my wrongs on thee. Walter Fitz Walter was once an honoured name in Arles, until thy wicked grandfather dishonoured it, made my father an out-

law, then a murderer—a wandering, homeless, lawless vagabond—by famine at last forced to sustain his life and to feed me, his young, helpless son, upon human flesh! and then, as a punishment for his crimes, to be burnt as a monster by fire, and his ashes scattered to the winds. All this was thy grandfather's doing, and it has been revenged upon him, upon thy father, and now upon thyself, who now liest a dying woman before me. Even thou and I—thou a princess, I a beggar—thou about to ascend to heaven, and I to descend to hell—are living examples and a dread warning to the great ones of this earth to restrain their passions, and to place a curb upon their inclinations; for once a man makes himself a slave to his own bad propensities, he thereby evokes from hell, as instruments then, and the means of punishment afterwards, thousands of demons, and gives them a domination over himself and others they otherwise never would have possessed. *I know it*; I do not say I merely believe it, nor do I, as brainless idiots, or half-read fools, say—*I do not believe what I do not see*. There is a God, and there is a devil; you have chosen your part; I have chosen mine; and both shall soon meet HIM whom each has served. I have had the capacity as well as the capability to do evil, and I have exercised it for evil purposes. It was I who sharpened the dagger for Selim, and I who drew the bow that slew thy betrothed—but, I need say no more, or if I do, I but speak *to the dead*."

As he uttered the words, he pointed to Florine, who had turned her head round, and kissing the diamond cross on the breast of Gunhilda, had, in performing that pious act, expired.

"I wished to tell her, Guy of Mascon," said the old man, "that which I now tell thee—that as I drugged the bowl to slay her, so now I drink it to my own destruction *here*—and—**HEREAFTER.**"

As these words were uttered he snatched up the bowl, drained it to its dregs, and before he could remove it from his lips, fell heavily upon the ground, a lifeless corpse.

As Florine and Swein had marched from their own land towards Jerusalem a betrothed bride and husband, so from Antioch to Jerusalem travelled Amine and Philip of Brefney to the Holy City; and amongst other festivities celebrated in honour of the downfall of the unbelievers, and the creation of a new Christian kingdom in Palestine, with Godfrey of Bouillon as the first monarch, was the marriage of Amine and Philip.

There were for centuries after the conquests won by the Crusaders in the Holy Land a branch of the ancient, gallant, and princely sept of the O'Reillys, in the Irish kingdom of Meath, long remarkable for their dark skin, brilliant black eyes, and bluish raven hair, and the tradition was that they were the descendants of a noble Brefney knight, who had won fame, wealth, and a foreign bride, at the time that Antioch was captured by Bohemond of Tarentum, and to which event the rumor ran that the Irish knight, or his bride, or some one of the bride's family, had mainly contributed.

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